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A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

FRANK TROLLOPE.

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A RIGHT-MINDED WOMAN.

CHAPTER I.

Sir Gerald Howard had been removed to the Royal Oak; but, as the news of the rising, and the putting of Oakfield Hall in a state of defence, spread like wildfire, he was in the utmost alarm, lest he should be captured by the conspirators and sacrificed to their just resentment; for he did not doubt that the rising had been caused by the report that he intended to betray his former friends and associates. Indeed, this determination had been expressed more openly than was consistent with Sir Gerald's usual caution,

but the fact is, mortal man has seldom endured more intense anguish, both of body and mind, than did Sir Gerald, between the time of his being wounded, and his arrival at the Royal Oak. His temporary insensibility did not last long; the very intensity of his sufferings seemed to restore animation; and he recovered to find himself lying across the horrible and loathsome object he had murdered. In the greatest imaginable horror, he contrived to drag himself to a short distance, but, faint with pain and loss of blood, he could only crawl a yard or two from the body; the broad-brimmed hat had fallen off, and in the distorted features of Hardbottle (whom he did not recognise) he beheld, as he supposed, such a change upon the face of Goodman, as could be accounted for by no natural means. He raved—he gnashed his teeth—he howled with terror—at the crime he had committed.

Attracted by his cries, the men who had pursued Driscol returned to the spot. These

persons had been employed by Hardbottle to aid him in his nefarious attempts upon Susan, Burnet, and they knew nothing of the faction, for Hardbottle had purposely avoided his old associates. Sir Gerald felt relieved by their presence, though he knew they would drag him to justice, but anything was preferable to lying beside that odious corpse.

The men had horses at hand, and on one of these the baronet was placed, supported before one of the party. From their conversation he learned who it was he had really slain. The motion of the horse put him to extreme pain, but bodily suffering was as nothing compared to his mental anguish, and a paroxysm of rage succeeded that of pain. That he of all the conspirators should be thus a wounded prisoner while they were at liberty—he who had despised and thought them all in his power—and although the foolery of Hardbottle whom he now hated as he had just before feared—again he raved, and swore, and writhed, so that the man had

the greatest difficulty in holding him on the horse; then the thought of his triumph in the betrayal of his associates crossed his mind, and he laughed and shouted aloud. Mad with conflicting emotions, he continued to rave, to laugh, and at intervals to groan with pain, till the man let him fall from his horse as they arrived at the door of the Royal Oak, not a little pleased to be rid of such a terrific burden.

No sooner had Sir Gerald been taken into the inn, than he announced his intention of betraying his confederates, the result of which announcement has been seen. His wounds were dressed and the ball extracted by the village surgeon who ordered him to be put to bed. With the morning came a calmer, though no less miserable, mood, for he soon learned the facts of the rising, and, as before stated, became extremely apprehensive of the conspirators. The wound was not dangerous in itself, but the great excitement he laboured under threatened disastrous effects and the

worthy surgeon could not help drawing a comparison between his present patient and one upon whom he had not long before performed a similar operation, the placid, passive, amiable Emile Briffault.

When the full danger of his position forced itself upon Sir Gerald, he insisted upon being taken at once to Norwich. The doctor shook his head; but, finding that this new cause of excitement was even worse than the danger of removal, he at length assented. The magistrate who acted in the absence of Sir Richard Jenkins, fearing a rescue of the prisoner, ordered a litter to be immediately procured for his removal. But there was no necessity for this precaution as far as the faction was concerned, although some of the conspirators, who could not enter into the noble proposal of Burnet, would gladly have slain Sir Gerald had he fallen in their way; but the more thoughtful and the more numerous party would not consent to so perilous an enterprise for such a pur-

pose, and they allowed the baronet to be safely conducted to Norwich.

This rapid removal, however, together with his previous pain both mentally and bodily threw the wretched man into a fever, which endangered his life. It was during his recovery from this attack that the full misery of his situation came upon his terror-stricken full. His associates were still safe and he alone suffered; this was gall and bitterness to him. The accumulation of crime which his ill-spent life afforded, was, as it now appeared, brought to a crisis, and the fear of death, death, with its awful (and to such a man hopeless) future—the terror of death was the climax of his despair. This feeling, however, as he gradually recovered, left him; but there was constantly present to his mind the dread of a criminal conviction. An inquest had been held upon the body of Hardbottle, and a verdict of wilful murder recorded against the baronet; consequently, he would be put upon his trial as soon as he

was sufficiently recovered; and the result of that trial he felt would bring about a violent death.

In this state he was surprised one day by the appearance of Driscol; that worthy, in the hurry of preparation at Oakfield Hall, had quietly walked away, and since that time had eluded all pursuit; and now with a fidelity that belonged to his dogged and brutal nature, and which would have done credit to a better cause, made his appearance before his master. His coming gave Sir Gerald an opportunity to put in practice his atrocious purpose. Driscol was sent forth as secretly as he came, and rode express to London; the result of which event was the removal, in a few days, of Sir Gerald, under a pursuivant's warrant, to the metropolis.

"A big paper, with the king's arms upon it, came down to the mayor," said Burnet's informant; "and Sir Gerald was conveyed to Lunnon in a coach, guarded on each side by a lot of soldiers, a state prisoner like, and

that can't be for killing such a rascal as Jack Hardbottle."

Meanwhile the little army of conspirators retained its defensive position. Days and even weeks passed away, and no attempt on the part of the supine and imbecile government was made to disperse, or to capture the rebels. Perhaps the insignificance of the insurrection was in some degree its safeguard.

This protracted time of safety no doubt tended to increase the confidence of the conspirators; yet this feeling was more than counterbalanced by the depressing influence of inactivity. The momentum of energetic action which would at first have made the insurgents a formidable foe, was by degrees dissipated. After the first impetus few joined their ranks, and in fact several instances of desertion, not only weakened their numerical strength, but still more seriously decreased their moral power.

Even after the Prince of Orange had appeared in England, it is well known he was

much disappointed at the supineness of the gentry, who, though well affected to his cause, held back for some time from joining his standard. If such was the case when the Prince in person required assistance, it is not to be wondered at, that James Burnet obtained no success.

William of Orange had long employed secret emissaries in England to ascertain the state of public feeling; but these agents acted with the greatest caution, and would not in any way compromise their master as the fosterer of treason. Princes are seldom favorers of treasonable practices, though they may be themselves the gainers, and for a time the abettors thereof. Royalty has a natural antipathy to rebellion, and we thus see that a usurper generally found means to oppress, if not to exterminate, the instruments of his successful usurpation. If this feeling is common in ordinary cases, no doubt it had extraordinary power in the breast of one so politic as William of Orange. He had, indeed, his

emissaries in England, but Sir Gerald Howard was not one of them, which the conspirators had yet to learn. They did so in the interval which followed their first rising; the private papers of Sir Gerald Howard were found in his escritoire at Oakfield Hall, and as they made no scruple of examining the secret correspondence of the treacherous villain, they soon discovered that his connexion with the court of Holland was a gross imposture, the better to impose upon themselves.

That the baronet was sincere in his desire to serve the Prince cannot be doubted, but it was solely because he believed it the only path left open to him to personal aggrandisement.

England, at that time, apparently on the eve of a great national struggle, seemed to the shrewd and witty, but reckless and desperate man, the only field for exertion—the only place in which to retrieve his ruined fortunes. He calculated upon the important advantages of stepping in advance of the times. He

calculated upon the high honour and emoluments which the Prince would bestow upon so active, so zealous, and so useful an adherent. He overrated the readiness of the English people to rise against their despotic sovereign; in fact, he altogether miscalculated.

The truth is, Sir Gerald Howard, though he had picked up some general information upon the views of the Prince of Orange, was not in the secrets of the Court of Holland. Indeed, his character was too well-known for him to be trusted by that Court, and this conviction led him to act upon his own responsibility, in the hope that such important service as he might thus perform would banish the memory of the past, recommend him to honour and lead to pecuniary advantages.

We have said Sir Gerald miscalculated; the deep malignity of his nature led him into private brawls and personal violence; the result of which has been seen. But, even had he succeeded in raising an insurrection, it is

more than probable he would have been suppressed by the King, and disowned by the Prince. The premature rising, indeed, was both personally and publicly injurious, and had a chilling effect upon the prospects of the Prince, for while the small party at Oakfield Hall were discouraged by the apathy of the country at large, the country at large was depressed by the forlorn situation of the party at Oakfield Hall. It was, however, an opportunity for the cultivation and display of personal character; and that of James Burnet assumed a moral dignity and elevation, which endurance alone can bestow, and adverse events alone bring to light.

The worthy old clergyman, of course, repaired to Oakfield Hall, and brought with him Blanche Stewart, who had remained entirely in his charge. The presence of Blanche gave both comfort and sincere gratification to James, though alloyed by the reflection that she might possibly be involved in the danger of their critical situation.

On all occasions of doubt or difficulty, James Burnet applied to his friend the Independent, whose cool and keen shrewdness was a great consolation to him. Indeed, though there were many points of dissimilarity in their characters, there was growing up between them that warm and steady intimacy which is founded on mutual respect.

CHAPTER II.

It was in the dusk of approaching evening while the insurgent army thus lay exposed to perils of many kinds, that James Burnet was summoned to meet his sister and Emile Briffault. Susan had encountered much difficulty and some danger in thus penetrating to the post of the patriots, as they proudly called themselves, and she had been accompanied and defended by Emile with a degree of spirit which proved that his meekness and suavity were by no means the result of cowardice.

"My brother—my dear brother!" exclaimed Susan, as she threw herself into his

arms, "I have at length found means to see you, and though the bitterness of death seems to hover over our meeting, it has its consolations. I now feel, that be your fate what it may, I am not ashamed of my brother —this trial has told us what you are."

"That's my brave Susan; the glance of your eye and the word of your lip have made a man of me; and it is the better, that I feared your presence would make me play the woman;—and my dear father —"

"Name him not, James—name him not; if you would have me support my firmness. Alas! alas! he is utterly absorbed in sorrow."

"But—but, he does not curse me now, Susan?"

"No, indeed, dear James; he sends you, by me, his blessing."

"It shall be a crown of safety to me in the hour of danger. I can walk more firmly if he thinks well of me."

"But time flies, my brother, and I have

that to say which brooks no delay. I come, James, to warn you of your danger, and beseech you to escape. Oh! my brother! you are cooped up here like sheep for the slaughter-house; we have certain intelligence that a military force is marching directly for this place, accompanied by that double-dyed traitor—Sir Gerald Howard."

"I would give all but life itself, Susan, to have that villain at arm's length—I would soon make my father again master of Oakfield Hall," he added, with a grim smile.

"It were absolute madness to think of such a thing, James. You must—you must fly, if you would save your father's life!"

"Fly, Susan! that is impossible; and were it possible, do you think I would desert my post? Do you think I would forsake the men who have made me their leader? Susan—Susan, I see you do not know me!"

"But think, James, of your hopeless condition; think of your death, which, without doing any good to the cause, would break the

hearts of your parents. Think of a desponding father—of a broken-hearted mother—of a sister, who would lay down life and hopes, interest and happiness, to serve, to save you! O fly! your life is a link to which hangs all our happiness."

"You plead well, Susan, but I cannot take your counsel—I cannot—I must not fly."

"Oh yes!—you can—you must—flight is yet in your power, but it may soon be too late. Follow my counsel—submit to my solicitation—fly—fly!" she continued, grasping her brother's arm and looking implor-ingly in his face; "fly, and—take Blanche with you."

A deep flush of agitation passed across the face of Burnet, which soon faded into settled sorrow again. He shook his head.

"You only pain me, Susan," he said, "by painting a happiness, which is out of my reach; flight is impossible."

"But were it possible, and with Blanche too?" she urged.

"Susan—no more; you tear my heart in twain—I say again, it is impossible."

"Not so, my dear brother, for to that end I come. Hear me, James! This gentleman has obtained a passport for two persons to quit the country by a small trading vessel, now lying in the Yarmouth harbour; this passport was designed for himself and his servant; but the Captain is his friend and he is willing to give the chance to Blanche Stewart and yourself."

The eyes of her brother seemed to fire afresh—the blood rushed to his forehead, as if it would have burst the veins. It was a moment of deep temptation—it was but a moment—the next was one of high and noble triumph.

"No—no—no!" he exclaimed, as he paced the floor of the apartment, and each *no* assumed a tone of additional determination, "No, it may not, and it cannot be."

"Oh, yes, James," she cried, again grasping his arm, "I would be the last to persuade

you to a dishonourable course, but your affairs are desperate, and your life would be so vain—so useless a sacrifice."

"You are mistaken, Susan; our force is greater than you imagine, and we may make a successful resistance."

"But you are unassisted, unsupported, and to-morrow morning will perhaps bring the military upon you. Disperse your men at once, there may then be a chance of escape for all—for you a certainty."

"You mistake the matter, dear sister; there may be a chance of escape for me—for my companions a certainty of detection."

Susan was silent, for she saw the force of her brother's remark. Truth to say, much as she desired the escape of James, she felt beneath the warmth of her pleading that her brother was right. She saw that there was a moral rectitude, a dignity of motive in his conduct, which she could hardly bring herself to oppose; and she silently owned that she was persuading him to a line of conduct which,

in similar circumstances, she would not have followed herself; and yet—the best and brightest specimens of human nature are but splendid contradictions—she pleaded with sincerity and zeal ; she pleaded as a woman, a daughter, a sister, not as Susan Burnet.

"Besides," said James, more cheerfully, "even were escape honorable—were it possible—it were a poor prospect to take Blanche, and become beggars in a foreign land."

"You need be no such thing, James. This gentleman, Emile Briffault, would give you the means of living on his estate—he—"

"And what makes the gentleman wish to tarry here, if I may make free enough to enquire?" asked James, interrupting her.

It was now Susan's turn to blush deeply; fear, anxiety, agony of mind, had hitherto kept her deadly pale; but as her brother spoke the blood rushed to her pallid brow and tinged her cheeks.

"Well, well—I see it all, my love, and I will not press the point; whatever be the

young gentleman's motives, I cannot profit by his offer; and yet—and yet—I will accept his kindness—Blanche shall escape. There is one to whom I will entrust her—one who has been led by no personal or private motive into the conspiracy, through whom religion has sanctified the efforts of revolution, and who was induced by every principle of duty and devotion to join our cause—he shall escape—he shall escape with Blanche, and will be to her both a friend and a father."

"But, my brother—"

"Susan, it shall be so; the faction can better spare him than me; for though he possesses the best heart and the best head, his hands would be of little service; and it is come to that now."

James Burnet hastily left the room. There was a pause of some duration, during which Susan and her lover maintained a profound silence, the former with her hands clasped before her, and with her head down, her expressive face full of sorrow, stood gazing

on the ground in profound reverie ; and Emile, though he sympathised with the affliction of his friend, stole an occasional glance at his beloved, and thought he had never seen anything half so beautiful.

At length James Burnet returned, leading Blanche Stewart and followed by the worthy Mr. Springfield. He had found much difficulty in overcoming the scruples of the latter, who was very unwilling to leave his associates in the hour of danger; but James had represented in such glowing terms the great advantage his presence would be to Blanche, and how little to the conspirators—he had set forth in such strong terms the desolate and destitute condition of the poor girl, and the benefit of rescuing her from the misery and want, which she was almost sure to encounter, if anything happened to himself —and if brighter days and better times than they had reason to hope should ensue—if the insurgent army should hold out—be relieved—and be triumphant—if the country

at large should rise, and the Prince should come, and honors and rewards flow in upon the leaders, the option would then remain of her return to England, or of his joining her in Switzerland. Mr. Springfield was convinced, and what he would not do for himself, he did for Blanche Stewart: he risked the imputation of a runaway.

The parting was a severe trial to all of them. Blanche clung to Burnet, and wept like a child; it was a scene of touching, overwhelming misery, yet was there mingled with that misery something of noble triumph. There was a dignity in the self devotion of James Burnet to an almost hopeless cause, an admiration of that conduct in his sister, that gave to the depth of their affliction that feeling of alleviation which sometimes makes sorrow a relief.

At length the time came for them to tear themselves away. Burnet, however, could not bear to part with Blanche until the last moment; he proposed to walk with them as far

as the outskirts of his defences, and this was the more necessary as they might need protection from his own party. Indeed, had it not been for Frank Middleton, who happened to hear the application of the young foreigner to one of the men, they might have found much difficulty in reaching Oakfield Hall. Middleton had guided and guarded them, telling Susan, however, that he expected a kiss before she went back, for his pains; at which Emile expressed great indignation. The party found Frank at the foot of the stairs, who said—

"I see it's all right; our noble captain himself is to be your escort; ah! my Lady Venus in the ascendent. You are safe now, or I would have seen you so, for old acquaintance sake; but I would have had my fee in spite of the fierce mounseer there."

"I should—I would you have taught more manners," said Emile, touching his sword.

"What the stoccado, eh, my fiery friend."

"You are—jack-a-nape—not worth quarrel."

"Ah, ha!" said Frank; "what you come so!" making a lounge at Emile.

"No, no—*comme ça*," laughed the young foreigner and beating down Middleton's guard with his cane, he struck his hat off.

"The d—l!" said Frank half angry. "What do you mean by that?" and piqued by the laughter of two or three of his companions, he picked up his hat and made two or three passes at Emile, but still with his sheathed sword. Briffault was a complete master of the art, and Frank was disarmed in a few moments.

"Had I known you were so clever in fence," cried Middleton good-humoredly, "I'd have seen you at the devil ere I'd have meddled with you."

This little incident diverted the attention of the party from their immediate sorrows, and it raised Emile considerably in the opinion of James Burnet and his companions. James conducted Blanche through the barriers that had been raised; he as-

sisted her across several plank bridges which had been thrown over ditches and trenches, and as he did so felt disposed to linger over his task longer than prudence dictated. The foreigner was compelled to perform the same arduous undertaking, for the convenience of Susan; and it is very remarkable that during that night walk, Mr. Springfield, the oldest of the party, was the most active and alert of them all. It is true, he had nobody to help over the ditches.

They had no sooner quitted the house than the Independent came down stairs and said to Middleton: "Friend Burnet may chance to walk further than is quite safe, for the wicked hath digged a pit, and the fowler prowleth for his prey. Why do we tarry here when our brother may lack our help."

"I know not whether the Amalekites or the Moabites were his teachers," said Frank, turning to his companions, "but, by my honour, our friend in black here, is the best

soldier and the bravest man among us,—Follow me, some of you, there may be hawks abroad."

Meanwhile, Burnet and his party had reached the extremity of their protected ground, and stood upon the verge of a piece of common land, broken only by a few bushes. The moon was in her last quarter, and wading through a mass of heavy clouds gave but little light, which was advantageous to the fugitives.

"Farewell—farewell, my heart's own and best treasure," said James, "if fortune smile on us and we should meet again, this parting, dear Blanche, will render our meeting doubly dear; if not—farewell—farewell for ever."

Blanche sobbed bitterly, and Burnet could hardly speak;" after a pause, however, he resumed—

"Mr. Springfield, to your charge I commit this dearest, most innocent, most unhappy girl. She will be a sweet companion to you

in a foreign land. To me, she would have rendered exile happiness!"

"Adieu, dear Susan, I rejoice that you will have a protector should you lose a brother — a better and a wiser man — one who can better estimate your character —enter into your pursuits—contribute to your enjoyments. Farewell, Emile, you cannot hope for any greater treasure on this earth than the heart of Susan Burnet."

They were about to part, "Yet stay," said James, "how shall I hear of your success—of your escape. I would not have you venture here again, lest you be implicated in our dangerous scheme—stop—I will send to Yarmouth, to ascertain the result of your attempt; what is the name of your ship?"

"The Trusty Friend," said Susan.

"Thanks, dear sister, thanks; and now farewell, farewell!"

Mr. Springfield took the almost fainting Blanche from the arms of her lover, and the sorrowful party set out on their jour-

ney, whilst Burnet stood watching them as long as he could discover the flutter of a white dress, on the dark heath. He dashed a tear from his manly cheek—he started! "Who goes there?" he cried, "Speak!—speak, or I fire!"

In an instant Middleton, the Independent, and some others were at his side.

"What's the matter, James?" asked Frank.

"See, see, a shadowy figure steals from yonder bush," cried Burnet.

"Fire! fire! my lads," cried Frank.

"No, no, stop!" said James, "it may only be one of the neighbouring cottagers who knows not the word, nor his danger."

"Then why the devil doesn't he speak," cried Frank. "Hollo! you sir, speak or we'll stop your tongue for ever."

"It's my belief," observd one of the men, "it's only a cow."

"It's my belief you're a jack-ass," retorted another, "how can a cow steal along as master

Burnet says this fellow was doing. Do you think he does not know a cow from a thief!"

"At any rate he is too far for pursuit," said James, "no doubt it was one of the villagers."

"Unless he cometh to spy the land," suggested the Independent.

"Then we must use the greater vigilance," answered Burnet.

Vigilance was too late, for while the party at Oakfield Hall busied themselves in preparation for an expected attack, Driscol, who was the spy, and the listener, rode full speed to Norwich, whence he had been despatched to procure some intelligence of the number, and the state of the party at Oakfield Hall, and confident in his knowledge of the locality he had ventured thus near to the post of the insurgents. That he was able to do so, displayed, perhaps, some laxity of discipline. He then hastened back to Sir Gerald with the important intel-

ligence, that the old clergyman was endeavouring to escape with Blanche Stewart.

Sir Gerald, anxious to display his zeal in the cause (for though brought to identify and assist, he was an object of some suspicion), more anxious still to injure James Burnet in the person of Blanche, hurried to the quarters of Colonel Bridgenorth, an experienced, honorable, but somewhat obstinate officer, the commander of the forces. This old officer entertained a thorough contempt for Sir Gerald, but it was his duty to effect the capture of the conspirators by every means in his power, and from his duty, however disagreeable, he never flinched.

Sir Gerald Howard was therefore entrusted with the command of a company of dragoons, the sergeant having received a hint to keep a sharp look-out upon him. He was soon at their head, attended by Driscol and proceeding towards Yarmouth.

CHAPTER III.

For some time past, James Burnet had slept but little, for anxiety, and danger, and distrust had kept sleep nearly a stranger to his pillow; but after the events of the evening there was a deep settled calm upon his spirit more congenial to slumber, and he slept longer than was his custom. He awoke much refreshed and with still the same serenity of mind, the same composure of spirit, which was like the stillness of the summer evening when the tempest has roared itself to repose. Burnet felt himself equal to any emergency whatever it might be; and he was soon to be tried. Intel-

ligence was brought that a body of military was marching directly towards Oakfield Hall.

"The time is come," remarked Burnet to his companions, "if we can repulse this body of men, it will be a signal of success, and we shall immediately be joined by numbers who now rest silent spectators; our cause will assume some shape, our names will acquire some reputation; we have but to maintain our position a little longer and succour is certain. My advice is that we put the old Priory into a state of defence, so that, in case of need, we may fall back upon it, and then march boldly out to face the enemy. A few rounds from the shelter of the wood near the Outhouses will give our foes a slight idea of what they may expect if they venture to attack us in our stronghold."

Burnet calculated upon the moral effect of an attack to warm the blood of his men; and though he had no hope of keeping the enemy from making an attempt upon Oakfield Hall at last, he knew that he could easily

fall back upon that place, while the regular troops, ignorant of the locality and unaccustomed to the ground, which was most broken and intricate, would act under great difficulties and disadvantages. The military knowledge and practical experience of the Independent now became of immense value, and ably seconded the local knowledge and natural shrewdness of James Burnet; and the little army marched in perfect order out of the only opening which had been left to the Priory. Advantage was taken of the thick wood, which thus became a second and external part of defence. Indeed, these points gave the conspirators great superiority over a much larger numerical force, so that it might have been predicted on the approach of the king's troops, that courage and conduct on the part of the insurgents would ensure their success. But there were other things to be considered; the conspirators scarcely knew their own strength, and the appearance of the military, well armed, and appointed—so

different to themselves—and commanded by experienced officers, tended to inspire a degree of fear. Besides, there was something of hesitation and doubt in the orders given by the insurgent leaders, something contradictory often in those orders, and, worst of all, a want of that subordination so essential to success, and which so much aids well-regulated troops.

The king's troops were drawn up upon a large piece of common land, that skirted the wood ; their arms glistening in the sunshine, their colours flying in the breeze, as good a disposition as possible was made of them, considering the broken and uneven ground; but the experienced eye of the commanding officer glanced over the whole with some anxiety, as he perceived the situation of the enemy, and the number which were emerging in good order from the dark shade of the wood, a cover to which they could so easily fall back.

" If we fight," he said, to one of his officers,

"if we fight it will cost us some loyal blood to dislodge yon nest of traitors."

"Ay, sir, if we fight; but that if is the word that will carry us through without a cut finger"

"Well, then, on, and let us try."

Colonel Brigenorth with some others of his party now advanced to the front of his troops and desired a parley. The insurgent leaders assembled to meet them.

"What I have to say is addressed to your whole party," said the officer.

"Say on, sir," exclaimed Burnet; "we want to hear nothing that may not be spoken in the face of the whole world, far more in the ears of those who are leagued together for liberty. There is but one spirit among us, and that is freedom."

"Then read out, sir," said the commander.

An officer rode from the ranks and read aloud a declaration of free pardon, from the King, to all but the leaders of the conspiracy, if they would lay down their arms. Here

followed a list of such as should be given up; Sir Richard Jenkins, the Rev. Mr. Springfield, James Burnet, Frank Middleton, young Vince, and the Independent.

There was a pause of some minutes, the men standing in mute, unmeaning silence, hardly seeming to understand the officer's words, so much were they taken by surprise. Then was heard a deep sullen murmur, like the rush of water. As the tidings spread, the body of the insurgent army rocked to and fro; James Burnet tried to speak, but his voice was drowned in the increasing clamour. A tumultuary jarring followed, as musket and carbine, sword and pike fell to the ground. The rebels, as if panic struck, cast away their arms, and fled in complete confusion from the scene!

"Forward!" cried the commander, and the rebel leaders, together with himself and his staff, were soon surrounded by soldiers.

"An easy victory," he exclaimed, "and gained with little loss. What think you,

gentlemen, you have had a bitter taste of treason."

"Ay, sir," said Burnet; "and it is not the lightest point of our misfortune that we have fallen into the hands of one who can exult over the unhappy."

"Humph! a shrewd hit; but I trust that for once it hath missed its mark. You are, if I mistake not my description, that fiery spark, James Burnet?"

"James Burnet I am; but if your description calls me fiery, it errs, for the world hath thrown its chilling influence upon me, and the fire of youthful folly and early ardour hath burnt out. I am one of those who set out as though life were a whole holiday, and the deepest task to get through it as joyfully and pleasantly as possible. I have found out the truth, that man's chief happiness lies in duties discharged and obligations fulfilled. I have proved that excitement is not happiness, and that reasonable, firm, manly self-control is as much the pleasure as the duty of man."

"Yet I find you here in the commission of treasonable practices — in open rebellion against your king and the government under which you live."

"Yes; and you find me conscious of my crime, and ready to submit to its due penalty. I have no plea of patriotism as my excuse, no honest enthusiasm for the public good. I agree, cordially agree, with the principles and opinions of my companions, but I joined their number not for public, but for private ends. My object was selfish—my conduct selfish—my object has been attained. I have released one dearer to me than life—from want, and ignominy and woe; and I am ready to undergo the punishment due to me. Once a member of the conspiracy, you, sir, as a man of honour and a soldier, would not, I am sure, have had me desert my post. I would rather be crushed as James Burnet, than crawl upon the earth like that loathsome reptile, Sir Gerald Howard."

"It is no treason to say I wish you had escaped," said the old soldier.

"Wish it not for me, sir," was the reply. "Here is Sir Richard Jenkins, the most active magistrate in the county, who would rather do anything than nothing. Here is young Master Vince, who meant no more harm in treason than he would in robbing a bird's nest; here is my poor boon companion, Frank Middleton, who mourns more sadly that James Burnet hath broken his allegiance to the wine cup than to the King. And here is this honest gentleman, who hates the name of a Catholic more than he fears the mouth of a cannon."

"Yes," exclaimed the Independent, "and who will lay down his life for his opinion as cheerfully as James Burnet."

"The clergyman you mention not," said Colonel Bridgenorth. "I know he left you last night; it is no treason to say I hope he may escape, though I doubt it."

"You doubt it, sir," cried Burnet, turning deadly pale, "why do you doubt it?"

"Because Sir Gerald Howard is after him with a troop of dragoons."

"Sir Gerald Howard!" cried James, and, hiding his face in both hands, he gave vent to the anguish of his heart in a deep groan.

"I am really sorry," said the Colonel, "that I have thus distressed you, but I was not aware—"

"Say no more, sir, I will bear my sorrows like a man; but this is the worst of all."

CHAPTER IV.

It would have been tedious to describe the march of the military with their prisoners to head quarters—it would have been vain to attempt a description of the anguish of James Burnet at the intelligence that Sir Gerald Howard was in pursuit of the worthy clergyman, and might intercept the flight of Blanche Stewart. We have, therefore, closed the scene, thus rescuing ourselves a second time from a dilemma with the old and hackneyed sentiment in which news-mongers revel—"his feelings were more easily imagined than described." Now the fact is, that a thing

being very old and hackneyed is often the same with its being very true—because truth is very old and hackneyed, and many new things would be all the better for a little wear and tear, for us to see what they are made of, especially as they are not likely to be very old and hackneyed. But the point is, that certain intense combinations of feeling in the human breast are more strikingly brought forth, or, if you please, brought home, by being left to the freemasonry of human nature, than by any laborious description which can be presented to the eye or to the ear. Imagination is warmer than the pen, more vivid than the pencil, both of which dwell too much in detail to shadow forth such complex emotions as are created by love, anxiety, fear, anger, and worst of all, suspense, at one and the same time, agitating the same bosom. Now this learned and lucid digression is a sort of handsome apology for snatching James Burnet and his friends from a very

miserable situation—therefore a very agreeable one to the humane reader—and placing them at once in the royal tent.

James the Second, who was with the army, paced the floor of his tent seemingly absorbed in anxious and agitating thought; but he signed to the officers who brought in the prisoners to keep them on the spot; and his eye occasionally wandered to them, as with hurried and interrupted pace he continued his walk. The King's dress was rich and even sumptuous, but carelessly and slovenly arranged. His head was bare, and the long curls of his hair floated over his shoulders; but his face, with much of the physiognomy of the Stuart family, had such an air of irresolute and dubious anxiety about it, as to be utterly unworthy of a monarch, and especially a monarch called upon to act in a case of great emergency. It is true that he was now seen under great disadvantage; his arbitrary and infatuated conduct had involved him in the greatest

difficulty; his insincerity in conceding to his people privileges which a brief gleam of prosperity induced him to recall, was obvious, and he had recently received the first intimation of his favourite daughter's desertion. It has been said he was pacing the floor with hurried and uneven steps; but this was not the only gesture of fidgetty nervous impatience that he betrayed. He had screwed up a letter which he had been perusing, and in the aberration of his mind continued to fumble and mangle it as he walked. His eye twinkled and occasionally filled with water, which, however, did not form itself into a tear; and there was a convulsive action of the muscles of the mouth that showed the hard struggle he was making with his feelings.

Two noblemen were standing beside a table, gazing with sorrowful faces on their ill-fated and ill-advised master; opposite stood a priest, whose dark and piercing eyes were also fixed on the king, but with a glance in

which pity was largely mingled with contempt. On the table was placed the crown, against which leaned a splendid crucifix of gold, inlaid with brilliants, an escritoire with a mass of papers, and a beautiful little cabinet picture of the Virgin completed the more remarkable furniture of the tent. The prisoners were ranged near the entrance, which was occupied by a file of soldiers. They had arrived at a peculiar juncture, a time when the King, from personal irritation, was disposed to be exceedingly cruel—from policy and fear to be extremely lenient. There was much difference of expression on the conspirators' countenances—Sir Richard Jenkins looked flushed and anxious, his manner betraying an agitation somewhat akin to that of the King. Young Vince was exceedingly pale, and his demeanour not unlike that of a schoolboy under the apprehension of the rod. Frank Middleton gazed carelessly about the tent, and affected an indifference that it was evident he did not feel. The Independent

wore an air of steady scorn; and James Burnet, having mustered all his resolution for the scene before him, was calm and composed. His anxiety concerning Blanche Stewart's fate had accompanied him into the royal presence, and even there distracted his attention; but the demeanour of the King —the mere fact of being in the presence of majesty, as well as the difficulty and danger of his situation, restored him to the deep interest of the present.

"Englishmen," at length said the king, addressing the prisoners; and one of the noblemen hastened to place a chair for him, and to draw a footstool before it, "Englishmen," he resumed, after seating himself, "you have learnt the bitter lesson, that those who are false to their sovereign, are never true to themselves. You have met the just reward of treason, but you fell by the treachery of that double-dyed traitor, Sir Gerald Howard. We have set our hand to his pardon that the ends of justice might

be answered; we have even employed him in our service; but the aim accomplished, we cast away the loathsome instrument with disgust. We have given him his life, and to life he meanly clings, when honor and esteem, and all that renders life valuable is lost. Enough of Sir Gerald Howard; it will be the better for him to keep away from public observation—from royal contempt."

The expression of sentiments, at once dignified and just, gave to the King's manner an appearance of firmness and resolution worthy of his rank and ancestry; but he relapsed into his air of incertitude and vacillation, as he beckoned to his attendants to bring the first of the prisoners forward.

"Who art thou?" he sternly enquired.

"I am Sir Richard Jenkins," replied that dignitary, but in a very undignified voice, "a magistrate, a justice of the peace for the county of Norfolk."

"A magistrate! and a violator of the laws of your country; a justice of peace,

and in arms against your lawful sovereign! This is an aggravation of a crime in itself one of the blackest that can disgrace humanity. It is well for you, Sir Richard, that we have learned your character before hand—a busy, meddling, over-weening idiot; one whose shallow wit and restless temper leads him into a thousand schemes, which he has neither sense to conduct, nor prudence to avoid. Art thou content, sir, to escape the punishment which is thy due, with the acknowledgment that thou art too foolish to be feared—too fickle to be trusted?"

Sir Richard, completely abashed and confounded, yet pleased to hear that he was likely to get off so easily, answered with a simpering whine, half laugh, half cry: "Please your majesty, I am content to have a foolish head on my shoulders, rather than a wise one on the block."

"Well, but you shall not blot the dignities of England with your title, nor the wis-

dom of England with your office, you are no longer a knight or a magistrate; and moreover, we award you a fine of five thousand pounds to our exchequer."

Richard Jenkins, Sir Richard no longer, looking more silly than a shorn sheep, divested of all that gave dignity to him, was yet glad to escape upon such terms. An officer received his sword and broke and cast it on the ground, and Richard Jenkins departed, while the King looked round upon his attendants, as if for applause at his magnanimity.

Young Vince was next conducted before the seat of the King, where he stood pale and trembling, with the dew of fear upon his brow.

"We think," said the King, turning to his nobles, "the lion should not put his paw upon the mouse," and as the courtiers smiled assent, he enquired, "Has this young man any relatives of importance who should have taken better care of him?"

"A rich old aunt," was the reply, "Lady Esther Vince of 'The Rookery.'"

"Five thousand pounds paid by her to the royal coffers will teach her to keep her chickens within bounds. Let this young traitor be carried back to his aunt, and the fine be enforced."

James Burnet being the next upon the list was brought forward.

"Ay," exclaimed the King, "this is a spirit of another sort; a man who stands firm whilst death is staring him in the face. That malapert look of thine, sirrah, will go nigh to lose thy life."

"I am sorry my face offends your majesty; but I cannot mend what nature gave me."

"You bear it bravely; but we look to see you blanch when the axe is raised."

"I fear your majesty will be disappointed, I am not so much in love with life as to shrink from the mere pain of losing it"

"What! are you so confident of the justice of your cause as to dare death in its defence?"

"Not so, your majesty; I am so well aware of my crime that I can bear to meet its punishment. I expected nothing less than death, and am not disappointed."

"This is mere bravado; big words cost little and weigh much."

"I have but given vent to my sentiments, Sire."

"You are content to die, then; is not life worth asking for?"

"Oh yes, your majesty, I would not throw away my life unasked; but I considered it useless so to do."

"You see that two of your associates have escaped."

"Yes, for their cowardice and folly; I will master my modesty so far as to say, I may not escape on such terms."

"You are a bold ruffler, and play with death as though he were a child. Have you none to care for the life that seems so valueless to you?"

"Yes, oh yes! I have a sister who would risk

her life to lighten my distress. I have a beloved mother who has bred, and fed, and wept and watched for me. I have a father —a father against whom I have rebelled, whose love I have resisted, whose care I have cast back upon him—"

"What!" exclaimed the King, interrupting Burnet, who was proceeding in a strain of bitter self-rebuke. "What!" he exclaimed, rising from his chair, "have you crushed a father's hope, have you wounded the hand that reared you? Stand back, sirrah! and boast not of a bold heart, if it be a cruel one. Stand back, sirrah! if you please me no better anon, your life is not worth an hour's purchase."

James Burnet had touched upon a topic peculiarly galling, at the time, to the King, who was some time before he recovered his composure, and when he did so it was harshly to interrogate Frank Middleton.

"Who, and what art thou, fellow?"

"One Frank Middleton, if it please your majesty; a poor gentleman out at elbows and with holes in his pocket, through which the money has even run like water through a funnel; for the rest a short wit, a rough tongue, and a ready hand."

The King looked fixedly at him. It was one of James's many foibles that he affected to read character very readily. He whispered to his nobles, and then said to the prisoner—

"Art thou content to renounce thy errors, put on a better appearance, and swear allegiance to my crown and cause?"

"I am content, and thank your majesty. I will reform and repent of my past errors. I will throw away the wine cup and the dice box, and wear a ready weapon in your majesty's defence."

"You say well, sir, and thereupon I pardon your misdeeds. Lead him away and see that he takes the oaths."

With that Frank Middleton was conducted

from the King's presence, so well pleased with his own escape that he forgot the trouble in which he was leaving his friend.

There remained but one on the list of prisoners—the Independent, who advanced with a firm step into the centre of the tent, and gazed with steady and severe eye upon the King, who returned the gaze with astonishment at the audacity of the prisoner. But for the situation in which they were placed, a spectator might have mistaken the prisoner for the King, the King for the prisoner.

"Dost thou dare to bandy looks with me, thy sovereign?" exclaimed his majesty, rising, his surprise giving way to anger. "Hast thou so many lives that thou seekest no mercy?"

"I seek mercy only from the King of Kings, and not from an erring mortal like myself—that is no creed of mine."

The nobles here made a motion as though they would advance, and more than one hand was laid upon its sword; but the

King motioned them to be quiet, and continued—

"You have been found in arms against your rightful sovereign; what can you say that you should not die?"

"I can say nothing that will induce you to let me live; my body you have, and upon it you must wreak your vengeance. Over my body you have power; over my soul none; and therefore am I in arms against you, to resist that power which you would usurp over my soul. James Stuart, you have set up Popery—you have gathered the priests of Baal around you, and endeavoured to force the consciences of Englishmen; therefore will thy kingdom be taken from thee and given to another—amen!—amen!"

"What!" exclaimed the King; "do you dare to revile the holy Catholic religion." The death shade of passion came over James's countenance, and he seemed about to give utterance to his anger, when the priest, with stealthy step, and silent tread, came round

and spoke to him in an under tone. James gradually became more composed, and at length said—

"Insolent heretic! thou art unworthy our clemency. One hour—exactly one hour—we give thee to prepare for death; and at the expiration of that time, by the very faith which thou hast impiously blasphemed, thou shalt die."

"To you, James Burnet, we make this proposal—and surely it is merciful enough to satisfy the most tender-hearted. Your life is forfeit to the hands of justice; found in arms you are amenable to military law; but on one condition we will spare you. Embrace the holy religion that you have heard reviled (and he crossed himself); confess your errors to this holy man — receive absolution at his hands, and walk away a free man."

A pause ensued, and a painful silence was maintained; the eyes of all were fixed on James Burnet.

"If it must needs be told, your majesty,"

Burnet at length said, "I have been over reckless in these matters, and that has been a sore sorrow to my father. In truth, I have been too deep in the matters of drinking and diceing, and all wild riot and revelry—a fact which I rue as sincerely at this hour as though I made mention of the same to this reverend gentleman. Had I the opportunity, I think my future life would be a strong contrast to my past, upon this as well as other points; but indeed I have little heeded the matters of another world: I would it were otherwise, even now. But I also know that a few years of dishonourable life, blotted as black as infamy can be by such a purchase, is not worth the cost. Your Majesty has my thanks for the offer, but I cannot accept it."

"Then, by my faith, the next tree shall give you short shrift. Away with them both to execution."

Thus, as in many such cases, punishment was likely to fall on the noble and the brave,

while the worthless and the base contrive to escape. But monarchs are but men and cannot always have their desires—James the Second had tried all his life to get his own way, and a very bad way it would have been had he succeeded, for he was a weak, bigotted tyrant. He had considered himself extremely magnanimous in allowing some of the conspirators to escape; more for the sake of pleasing his courtiers than himself, and he resolved to gratify his irritable feelings by a little sanguinary severity.

On the first alarm of an invasion by the Prince of Orange, James had hastily restored some of those rights and privileges that he had previously arrested from his subjects; and when that alarm subsided had basely, as well as imprudently, renewed his encroachments; he was therefore evidently insincere. He was deeply incensed at the present state of affairs, and it is therefore probable that his forbearance was rather the result of policy than clemency.

Before the prisoners could be removed, Colonel Bridgenorth hurried into the tent, and making a sign to the officer to keep them on the spot, he requested immediate audience of his Majesty. The colour rose to the king's brow at this interference with his will, and not less so at the unceremonious intrusion of the Colonel, for James was a lover of petty formalities; but there was that in the manner of the intruder, which showed that his business was too important for ceremony, and no sooner had he spoken a few words in private to his Majesty, than the face of the king became as pale as it had been previously flushed; while the word "landed!" as it dropped in an emphatic whisper from the trembling lips of royalty, fully explained the cause of his discomfiture. The angry spot began to glow again on the king's brow, when Colonel Bridgenorth, as was evident from the gestures of both, began to speak of the prisoners; and all they could gather of the conversation—although, it may be supposed, their ears were

not idle—were the words "actually pardoned three of them," which the king pronounced in a most emphatic tone; but we who stand so much nearer to majesty than convicted traitors have the privilege of over-hearing the monarch's last words, which were—

"Well, Colonel, since it must be so, I will respite them for the present—for the present, Colonel, mark you—if it be impolitic to put them to death in this emergency, their death shall be postponed; but I will not be trifled with. I will exercise my royal prerogative without being dictated to. I will be a king in spite of my enemies—or my friends either, Colonel Bridgenorth."

The colonel bowed very low, and the King spoke aloud—

"Take those men away; for the present their execution is *to be* postponed," laying a bitter emphasis on to be; "but, mind you, keep them securely, as your heads shall answer it."

CHAPTER V.

JAMES BURNET and the Independent were conducted from the presence of the King. They observed considerable tumult and confusion in the camp. Men were gathered into groups, and talking with loud voices, and flushed faces, and when Bruton, the officer who ushered the prisoners from the royal tent, came near, they gathered around him to obtain intelligence. So great was the pressure, that the prisoners were well nigh separated from their guard, and but for the firm conduct of Bruton, a steady old soldier, had been entirely so.

It would, indeed, have been imprudent to

have attempted the execution at the present crisis, and that the counsellors of the King, who were much wiser than himself, knew full well. The general spirit of insubordination had crept into the ranks even of the royal army. Some time before several regiments had offered to lay down their arms rather than submit to the performance of Mass at the head of their corps—long before they had been rebuked for shouting at the deliverance of the bishops—and now the landing of the Prince of Orange occasioned the deepest excitement. But when Colonel Bridgenorth appeared, and ordered them to quarters, the instinct of obedience, inherent in the British soldier, was instantly followed, and a few hours afterwards when they were drawn up by their general, a steady loyalist, and the King came out to receive them, he was received with every demonstration of respect; for there is something in the presence of a King, disguise it as we may, that demands a certain degree of reverence, and a

sympathy with time, misery which goes far to make men forget past misconduct. So that for the present at least, the army was at the command of the King, and the prisoners had the mortification to find themselves condemned and imprisoned rebels, in the midst of an army, whose principles and feelings were congenial with their own.

Burnet and the Independent were closely confined, and miserable indeed was their condition, but the state of the Independent was comparative happiness to that of Burnet. The former was a man of an extraordinarily placid, even temper. He was seriously and steadily devout, and he had learnt to take the vicissitudes and mutations of life with the utmost composure. He endeavoured most strenuously to impart a portion of his equanimity to his friend; but James, besides his difference of temperament, had to endure the painful suspense arising from his ignorance of Blanche's fate, a suspense which sometimes drove him almost to desperation.

It was now that commands were given for the royal army to march to ———. The lethargic conduct of the people of England towards Prince William, though so generally invited to their shores, gave to the few friends of the King some sanguine hopes of success. He would not, however, at present put his prisoners to death, but he determined that they should be carried with him, and in the event of success, be made a wholesome example to the royal army.

"I have done all I can for you," said Colonel Bridgenorth to the captives; "but I cannot procure your release, even upon parole. If there be anything, however, you wish for, I will do my best to obtain it."

The prisoners proffered each a separate request. Burnet begged to be made acquainted with the movements of Sir Gerald Howard. The Independent only asked for his Bible. One was easily granted, the other was not. No intelligence of Sir Gerald had as yet arrived. The Bible was brought by a soldier, who gave

the prisoners a significant glance, and then allowed his eyes to fall upon the cover of the book; he could do no more for there were others in the room. But the moment they were gone the prisoners narrowly examined the cover, and found, in very slight pencil marks, the following words—"Fear not; the prisoners shall go free."

"We have friends in the camp," remarked the Independent.

CHAPTER VI.

THE army on their way to ———, had halted for the night at a hamlet on the road. The head quarters of the King and his chief officers were established at the little inn, and the prisoners were confined in the upper chamber of a cottage, the lower part of which was occupied by Bruton, and a sufficient guard. The dusk of the dull November evening was closing in; the wind howled mournfully around the temporary prison of Burnet, and the branches of a large beech tree which overhung and half covered the cottage, swayed against the little lattice. It was getting too dark for the Independent to read his

Bible, he had been poring over it at the window, but the shade of the tree increased the darkness, and he now sat beside Burnet, both of them buried in their painful meditations. The murmuring of voices could be heard in the under apartment, and an occasional burst of laughter from the guard, mingled with the hissing sound of some culinary process, showed that they were preparing to comfort themselves with the good things of life after the day's march.

The measured step of a sentry had been audible for some time, but it became still, and as the prisoners sat in silence, Burnet's attention was attracted by a sharper sound against the window than that of the flapping branches of the trees. At first he thought it was a gust of rain, but upon the repetition of the sound it seemed more like that of small gravel, thrown against the glass. Breathless with expectation, he stole to the casement, and gently opening it, received a small piece of paper which was thrust up on the point of a

halberd by some one from beneath, but whose person was concealed by the trunk of the tree. The sentry was absent — he was probably the deliverer of the paper—but no sooner was it in the hands of Burnet, than the halberd was lowered, and the sentry was again on his post whistling a tune and walking to the measure.

Burnet closed the window; the Independent came to his side, but a new disappointment arose—it was impossible to read the paper, the writing being traced in faint pencil marks; they turned it every way; they held it to the light, they took it up, they laid it down, but all in vain; it had been as much as the Independent could do to decipher the black letters of his Bible; it was quite impossible for them to make out faint pencil characters. By dint of knocking at the door, they summoned two of the guard, who came, however, without a light.

"We want a light," said Burnet; "we are most cheerless and uncomfortable in this dull

place; could you not, my good fellow, let us have a light?"

"Clean against orders," said one of the soldiers; "what would you do with a light?"

"I would read my Bible," said the Independent.

"You must be precious fond of your Bible to be reading it all day long, and then wanting to read it all night as well."

"Do you read it very attentively, sir?" asked the other soldier, in a marked tone.

"Why, what a fool's question," said the first speaker; "do you think the gentleman would read so much of what he does not care about. Why do you ask him such a question?"

"Because I think if I read it so often I should know it all by heart, that's why, Johnson."

"You!" retorted Johnson, "that's a misfortune not likely to happen to you; you know about as much of the Bible as I do of Hebrew."

"I know one of the Psalms by heart, and this very night—aye, this very night, I could repeat it."

"Ha, ha! that's capital; why you're the first Puritan we ever had in our corps," said Johnson.

"What is the matter?" cried Bruton, the officer from below.

"They wants a light, sir," was the reply.

"Then they cannot have it," said the officer; "it is contrary to my orders."

"You hear, gentlemen," said Johnson, "I know'd it was of no use to talk about it. Bless you, I think old Bruton would fancy you were going to set the house afire, and walk off under the shade of the smoke. You had better go to bed, gentlemen, I think, for darkness and light is all one when one's asleep." And he pointed to a mattress which had already been laid down for their use.

"Good night, sir," remarked the other, "I am sorry you cannot see your Bible. I could

repeat the psalm if I might stay, but I dare say you know it as well as I do."

"Come along, you canting fool," cried his companion, and the men retired.

The excitement of the prisoners was heightened by this incident; the soldier was evidently in the secret, and the pointed way in which he had uttered the words "this very night," led them to conclude that some attempt to liberate them was about to be made; but of what nature! what was to be their part in the plan! Perhaps the whole success of the scheme might depend upon their co-operation, and yet there they were, condemned to utter ignorance of everything that it was so important for them to know; hour after hour passed away in miserable suspense. They posted themselves at the casement and strained their eyes into the darkness of the night, but all in vain. They whispered into each other's ears a thousand hopes—a thousand doubts, anxieties, and fears.

At length all was silent in the house, and out of it; an occasional gust of wind, the distant bark of a dog, the heavy tramp of the sentinel, was all that broke the stillness. The very silence became oppressive; all was so quiet, that the heavy breathing of some distant sleeper, could be distinctly heard.

The prisoners had proposed to relieve each other at the window, and lie down alternately; but they they were too deeply interested to move, and they remained with their hands on each other's shoulders, rivetted to the window. They were courageous, firm, strong-minded men, and felt mutual confidence in the society of each other; yet such was the nervous, irritating effect of their situation, that the beating of their hearts might be mutually felt and heard: and when, at length, some time after midnight, a single pellet of earth struck the glass, they both started like a couple of timid school-girls. Burnet—with trembling hand, unfastened and opened the window,

mentally cursing, very devoutly, the peculiar noise that little casements, with their many diamond panes, invariably make. Nothing was to be seen, and Burnet, by way of signal, shook, from the window, his white cravat, the end of which was forcibly pulled, then he looked out.

"For Heaven's sake make haste," whispered some person below, "get on to my shoulders."

The window was barely wide enough to allow of any one getting through the opening, but Burnet put out one leg which was seized and placed upon a man's shoulder. The sentinel for one brief moment cast the ray of a dark lantern that way, and allowed James to see the preparations of his descent. One man stood on the ground with his hands elevated above his head, and firmly planted against the wall; another stood on his shoulders, and standing in the same position, received Burnet's first step, by which means the latter was enabled to reach the shoulders of the lower man, and

by this living ladder soon reached the ground. A few moments only elapsed ere the Independent stood beside his friend. They were soon equipped in military cloaks and hats.

The two men who had aided the escape of the prisoners, were joined by the sentinel and another, and the four, taking the prisoners by the arms, led them silently and swiftly away. Not a word was spoken by the party. On turning an angle, a long line of ruddy fires showed the out-posts of the army. To a point between two of these they steadily advanced, but keeping them both at considerable distances on either hand. They were challenged more than once, but gave the word, and were allowed to pass. At length, as they neared the utmost lines of the army, more caution seemed necessary, for they crept stealthily along, when the measured step of a sentinel was heard at the very spot for which they were making their way. Nevertheless, they proceeded, and a low whistle from one of the party being answered

by a short cough from the guard, showed that he was in their interest. At this moment a distant voice cried, "Who goes there?"

"All right—only myself," said their friend the sentinel, and they passed swiftly on.

A rapid and silent walk across a meadow, brought them to a high-road, and being now completely beyond hearing of the out-posts, they got into a steady, swinging trot, which was occasionally relieved by a quick walk.

There was something highly exhilarating to the spirits of the prisoners in this night-march, after their confinement. The rapid pace—the free action—the frosty night air, in which their steps rang upon the hard ground—above all, the sense of liberty! that delicious, that invaluable thing—made them exult in their situation. Not a word, however, was spoken, until they paused to take a dram of spirits from a case-bottle, which the soldiers carried, and then the man on one side of Burnet said:

"By the horns of my lady, the moon, it takes as much trouble for the true men to desert, as for the traitors to escape."

"Frank Middleton!" exclaimed James Burnet, "is it you?"

"Who should it be, but Frank Middleton, the friend of thy youth? Who do you think could have planned so delicate an escape? Did'st thou not think of the days of orchard robbing, when thou did'st slide down my back? By all that's sacred, the weight of thy foot hath made my blade-bones ache."

"How shall I thank you, my faithful friend?" cried James.

"In two ways—by saying 'good-bye,' and seeing me no more."

"You cannot be serious, Frank, but of that hereafter. Tell me, I implore you, have you heard anything of Blanche Stewart. Has she escaped that fiend Sir Gerald Howard?"

"Nothing, upon my honour, have I heard. Sir Gerald is still out with the dragoons; but whether he hath fallen in with the pretty

bird or not is uncertain. But depend upon it, my friend, if the villain had taken the runaway, he would, ere this, have returned to the army with his prisoner."

"I will go down at once to the sea-coast," said James.

"What! and challenge Sir Gerald, and all the dragoons to single combat, like Guy, Earl of Warwick."

"I must and will go, Frank, or my heart will burst," cried James, with vehemence.

"And thrust your head into the lion's mouth; for Sir Gerald is as dangerous and ferocious an animal as any wild beast; and moreover, you will fall into the royal power again, when there is no faithful friend, or consummate fool—which is much the same thing —to peril his life for you."

"But I may rescue Blanche, or die in her defence."

"No doubt both very pleasant things to do. However, James, as it is more pleasant to die in good company than alone, I would

advise you to get more power before you make the attempt."

"Here are six of us," said the impetuous youth, "and some—"

"Gramercy, my lord," said Frank, interruping him, and putting himself in stage strut, "but your seven men in buckram have grown out of two misbegotten knaves in Kendal green; we four, who wear his Majesty's uniform, must part company with you two traitors."

"How then shall I obtain assistance," asked Burnet.

"By making the best of your way to the Prince of Orange; perhaps his Highness will reward you with a troop of horse; then there can be no more commendable exploit than an attack upon the royal dragoons. Make Sir Gerald your prisoner, and bind him till his face becomes as black as his heart, if that be possible."

"Friend James," said the Independent, who had silently watched the progress of

affairs, "thy young friend counsels well; we have not the strength of Samson to slay a multitude single-handed, however just our cause; and it becomes us to take prudent counsel."

"You say well, sir," returned Frank, "and now that it is light enough to see the way, mark well the finger posts where the roads part—there we will follow their example—take thou the left—we will take the right."

"And wherefore must we part, Frank?" said James.

"Simply," laughed Middleton "because I am afraid of thy company, and thou art ashamed of mine. Thou hast become so marvellously particular of late that the flash of a wine cup or the twinkle of a bright eye must not to be named in thy presence. You have grown so fond of our friend in black here, that a ruffling blade is no longer bearable; one cannot associate with the raven and the lark too—and I, my friend, am the lark."

"Say rather the chattering magpie," cried Burnet, smiling.

"Well, which ever you please; but, in truth, James, if you are ashamed of my company, I am afraid of yours. We four are only gentlemen of the army, joining the Prince; but you two are condemned rebels escaping from captivity. Depend upon it there will be hot pursuit for you, for us none, and it would be at the cost of our heads to be caught in your company."

"But, like us, you are going to join King William."

"Ha! there you go, James, your tongue will ruin us all. Why, man, there is no such person—nor likely to be; I suppose you allude to the Prince of Orange who is come over to England simply to restore order—to mediate between James the Second and his people, and having done so will go back to Holland with the thanks of the British Parliament."

So saying, Middleton thrust his tongue into his cheek and waggishly tapped his nose with his fore-finger.

"But how is it, Frank?" asked Burnet, "that you join Prince William after purchasing your life with an oath of allegiance."

"Ah! there you go again; that is one of your super-superlative notions of honour. Will honour cure the smart of a wound? No, no, James, our notions are not companionable. So here we part, for this is the cross-road. You go direct to the Prince, I go through the medium of—never mind how I go—so farewell, James, farewell for ever."

"Farewell, Frank!"

CHAPTER VII.

For two whole days did Burnet and the Independent plod wearily on, finding bye-paths when it was possible—striking out of the high-road to avoid pursuit, thus making the journey much longer. The sun was near setting on the second day, and having past through a small village they entered upon a bare common near the rendezvous of the Prince's army; jaded, fatigued, and foot-sore, they walked slowly along, animating one another with the thought that rest and safety lay at length before them. They had been told in the village that a party of the Prince's

cavalry had not long before passed through the place, and when they heard the sound of horses coming in that direction, they sat down on the road-side to await their approach.

A cloud of dust, through which the glitter of arms and accoutrements glanced in the sinking sun, came rapidly on, and it was not till flight or concealment was completely out of their power, that the fugitives recognised the uniform of the royal life guards. Ten or twelve troopers came galloping down the road, and at their head the well-known face of Colonel Bridgenorth. They reached the fugitives and were dismounted in a few moments.

"My poor young friend," said the Colonel, taking Burnet by the hand, "you were surely born under an unlucky planet."

"The stars in their courses fought against Sisera," said the Independent.

"I am truly sorry that my duty is of such a nature; but it is my duty;" and from his duty old Bridegnorth would not shrink even

to save his only son. "You must go back with me. My orders are to lodge you in the most secure place that I can reach, even though it be in Newgate. The King upbraids me with your flight, and will hang that poor faithful fellow Bruton, as sure as the sun is in heaven, if you are not restored. My poor master is blinded with wrath, alarm, and anxiety; and I trust it is no treason to say that he is somewhat vindictive."

Colonel Bridgenorth paused to listen; there was the tramp of horses again in the village, and, as it seemed to his experienced ear, in greater strength than his own.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you are unarmed I perceive, therefore I need not demand your weapons; but, remember you are my prisoners, and I advise you not to attempt to escape, as my men have orders to shoot you on such an emergency. You must be content, for the present, to ride behind two of the soldiers as I have not yet spare horses for you;—gentlemen of the Life Guards, mount."

In an instant the saddles were filled; the prisoners were obliged to submit. Burnet grasping the hand of a soldier swung himself on the crouper, and the imperturbable Independent without moving a muscle did the same.

Colonel Bridgenorth was the last to mount, and he sat watching the approach of the cavalry with some anxiety. At length the head of a column of horse emerged from the village. The first line after advancing some distance made a halt; but the main body came thickening up behind, and when the whole column had appeared, they approached at a gentle trot, which soon brought them up to the Colonel and his little party. The former, with his ready eye, had immediately discovered the utter absurdity of trying either to fight or fly; and his men sat motionless as statues, each with his carbine on his thigh, until they were surrounded by files of the Prince's cavalry.

A few words passed between the com-

manding officer and Colonel Bridgenorth, and to the demand that they should appear before the Prince, the latter, of course, acceded. The horses of the Royal Life Guards were turned, and the whole party was led into the camp of William of Orange.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE prisoners, for such they may still be considered, were conducted into the presence of the Prince of Orange. There was a most singular and striking contrast between the appearance and demeanour of this extraordinary man and that of the ill-fated and ill-advised James the Second. Our unfortunate friends seemed to have gained little by the exchange; instead of the wavering and irresolute manner of the King, they encountered the fixed and even stern gaze of an eye which expressed the height of indomitable decision.

The features of the Prince, though by no means devoid of masculine beauty, were

harsh and severe when compared with the noble lineaments of the Stuart physiognomy. His dress was plain, even to affectation, and the equipments of his tent corresponded with his personal attire. He had been dictating despatches to a secretary, who sat at a table beside him; and as he gazed upon Burnet and the Independent his finger remained upon the precise word of a document he had been perusing.

Such was the keenness and penetration of his character, that he seemed to have read at a glance the particulars of the captives' history. He, however, gazed coldly on them, while an officer detailed the circumstances of their capture. The fact is, William, at that moment, happened to be not only a little perplexed, but a little out of temper also; he was much disappointed that the gentry of the western counties, on whose assistance he had been led to calculate with much confidence, did not respond to his appeal so readily as might have been expected. He had published

declarations of his pacific and constitutional designs, asserting his intention to do nothing contrary to the established institutions of the country, and totally disclaiming any designs upon the throne of his father-in-law.

The Prince had, indeed, a delicate game to play; he had received innumerable invitations from men of high rank, and, as before named, he had employed secret emissaries in England, but he had not, nor would he now commit himself. He persisted in the statement that he had no views on the crown; and he would not risk what hopes he might secretly entertain by rash and premature measures. He thought he might offend the more moderate party should he countenance convicted and condemned traitors. Perhaps he would not have been quite so severe had the present offenders been connected with his own emissaries; but as they were obscure and unimportant persons, he considered he might make them examples of his apparent moderation.

The prisoners, who had expected to be dismissed if not applauded, regarded the ominous silence of the Prince and his stern unbending gaze with surprise and dismay. They were not aware of the unfortunate conjuncture of circumstances at which they had been brought into his presence, and they felt somewhat in the dilemma of man who has escaped the paw of the bear to rush into the jaws of the lion. A few days later, when so many noble and distinguished persons joined the standard of William his captives might have been safe, but he was now only feeling his way, as it were, and as a thousand thoughts of the kind to which we have alluded rushed through his mind, he slowly said:

"These men are condemned and convicted traitors, found in arms, not to aid a right, and just, and glorious cause, but to attempt the life of their rightful sovereign. Far be it from me to countenance so dark a crime as

treason. I am come over to this country, not to subvert its laws, but to enforce them. I am come at the general invitation of the people, not to create disturbance, but to quell it. I am come to throw myself upon the discretion of a British parliament, not to release convicted traitors. Let these prisoners be restored to their escort, and the soldiers set at liberty. You say the King has detained their former custodian and will perhaps hang him for his neglect; it were pity that the true man should suffer for the false, and we know the tender mercies of his majesty. Away with them, and disturb me not from matters more important."

Then turning to Colonel Bridgenorth, he said—

"You, sir, will probably join my standard —my watch-word being moderation."

The Colonel, without a moment's hesitation, declined.

"Then, sir," said the Prince, with some

acerbity, "you have no business in my camp—dismiss this gentleman, and restore the prisoners."

So saying, and briefly touching his hat to the low obeisance of the Colonel, the Prince turned to his secretary, and with a half muttered exclamation of impatience, resumed his occupation, and the prisoners were conducted from the tent.

"We are in a pretty pass, between friends and enemies," said Burnet.

"Put not your trust in Princes," added the Independent.

Colonel Bridgenorth passed the night at the village we have mentioned, and set out the following morning on his return to Salisbury; but intelligence reached him, that a large body of men, soldiers, civilians, gentry, and peasantry, had posted themselves on his intended route, and raised the Prince's standard. Rumours were also afloat that the royal camp was broken up, and that the King had fled to London. This, however, was not true; yet,

Colonel Bridgenorth deemed it expedient, instead of trying to reach Salisbury, to make the best of his way to the metropolis, which he considered acting more strictly up to the spirit of his instructions; and though the Colonel was too sensible not to perceive that the royal cause was almost hopeless, he determined to do his duty to the last. The crisis was come, and all England was in a ferment. The places through which they passed were in commotion—trade was at a stand-still—reports of all kinds were in circulation, and no one knew what to receive as authentic. The gentry of Somerset and Devon had at length risen, as one man; vacillation and incertitude were gone, and the tide of insurrection rose with increased rapidity, in consequence of having been so long delayed. The army was full of disaffection, and troop after troop deserted, or was led off by its own officers.

The ill-advised King then took the resolution of retreating to London, thereby showing

his weakness and timidity. Still, Colonel Bridgenorth detained his prisoners, and conducted them through all the perils and confusion of the route, and, at length, lodged them, according to the tenour of his master's commands, within the gloomy walls of Newgate.

The hearts of the poor prisoners sank within them, as they found themselves secured in this remorseless dungeon. The grief of James Burnet, who was still in doubt about Blanche Stewart, being the deepest. Colonel Bridgenorth had made every inquiry, but in the distracted state of the country it was impossible to obtain satisfactory intelligence. The only information at all to be depended on, was that the troop of Royal Dragoons, which had been sent to Yarmouth, had returned to Norwich; but whether they had brought in any prisoners or not it was impossible to say, nor was it known whether Sir Gerald Howard had returned with the troop.

In this state of incertitude, Newgate closed its black and frowning walls upon our friends until they could be safely conducted to Norwich, leaving them in the most miserable state of suspense. As, however, it would be the height of incivility to let the courteous reader suffer in a similar manner, we propose to make a retrograde movement, and for a while trace the fortunes of the fugitives.

CHAPTER IX.

When Sir Gerald Howard found himself at the head of the Royal Dragoons he felt a degree of gratification, in the prospect of securing the fugitives, into which we hope and believe, for the honour of human nature, few could enter. When we have done a kindness to a fellow creature, it often becomes a reason why we should follow it up with others. There are, however, some natures so devilish that having inflicted one injury, they hasten to do another. They feel that they are the objects of hatred and of scorn to their victims, and they hate or despise those by whom they know they are hated or despised.

Sir Gerald Howard had inflicted the most

deadly injuries on the faction; he had been the originator of the conspiracy; and had been the first to betray its members. How they must execrate his name; how they must hate—how they must despise (as far as that feeling is consistent with hatred) the false-hearted traitor. He fed his morbid imagination by fancying all they said—all they thought of him. He felt that all his prospects were blasted — his schemes frustrated—his very name was become a reproach —his very life, though saved at such a cost, a complete burden. James Burnet—how he would triumph — would execrate — would loathe—would scorn him. With what utter contempt would he point him out to his associates, as the black-hearted villain, who had betrayed his friends — the miserable craven whom all honest men should loathe. Sir Gerald actually gnashed his teeth, in the extremity of his irritated feelings—Revenge!—yes, he would have revenge—a fearful revenge.

In the morbid excitement of his malignant mind, Sir Gerald had half persuaded himself that he—he, the double-dyed traitor, was more sinned against than sinning; and though a single moment's reflection made him confess the absurdity of such a thought, yet, while he could not think so, he felt, and he acted, as if it had been the case. That meek and smooth-tongued parson, how he should rejoice in foiling him—and Blanche Stewart, to injure her would be to sting James Burnet to the very soul. She was not implicated in the conspiracy, it is true; but she would be brought back to indigence, penury, and shame. Perhaps, too, there might be a struggle and a chance shot, or better still—and he grinned a hideous grin, with a complication of evil thoughts as Jack Hardbottle's schemes presented themselves and came thronging on his mind.

Sir Gerald Howard pushed on at the head of his troop, and the morning sun saw him riding into the town of Yarmouth; but

there is a proverb, and often proved a true one, which says :—" The more haste the worse speed," and it is not improbable that the baronet would have sped better had he hastened less ; for he overshot his mark in the night, and we doubt not the humane reader will join us in the wish, that in all such errands as that of Sir Gerald Howard the actors may always make more haste than speed.

The fact is, our friends the fugitives had purposely avoided Yarmouth, and keeping to the right thereof were making for Lowestoft by a different road from that traversed by Sir Gerald and his Dragoons.

Burning with malignant feelings and desires, the baronet rode at once down to the harbour, and to his great satisfaction found the schooner, " Trusty Friend," lying alongside, among a few other small trading vessels.

The Dragoons were ordered immediately to dismount, and Sir Gerald, closely followed by the scoundrel Driscol, strode up the plank

by which the ship was approached from the shore. Here, again, Sir Gerald overstepped his purpose, for while the arrival of the Dragoons attracted the attention of all who were astir at that early hour, he did not observe that there were two persons talking together at a little distance, one of whom he would not have known, though he was the very person he sought, namely, the captain of the schooner; and the other he would have known, though he was the last person he expected to see, namely, our respected friend Thomas Goodman. The worthy old man, however, instantly recognised Sir Gerald Howard, and whispering for a moment or two into the ear of his companion, walked away, and when one of the sailors pointed out his captain to the baronet, he was standing alone.

Sir Gerald beckoned to the captain to come on board, and while he did so, some of the soldiers observed Goodman, in his grey coat and broad beaver, stalk from behind a number of barrels, which were piled up on

the quay, and remarked to one another the peculiarly long, firm, swift stride of that hale, active, muscular man. They could not, however, see him when he had turned a corner, or they might have thought that never did leathern gaiters and buckled shoes take such monstrous steps, especially when belonging, as they did, to the legs of an old man such as they encased.

Thomas Goodman paused not to breathe until he reached a road-side inn, outside the town; and then, turning his disappointed pony's nose away from the manger, just as the poor animal had taken his first bite of his breakfast, he bridled, saddled, and bestrode him in an incredibly short space of time, and was instantly in the saddle, urging the pony to his utmost speed along the road towards Lowestoft. He was just in time to save his friends from running into the lion's mouth, if we may be excused for applying the name of so noble an animal to so vile a man as Sir Gerald Howard, who closely interrogated the

captain, and minutely examined every hole and corner of the ship, without obtaining any satisfaction.

The captain, it is true, admitted that he expected two passengers to sail with him; but that they had not yet arrived, and he expressed the most virtuous and loyal indignation when informed by Sir Gerald that they were proscribed traitors. The captain went so far as to inform his interrogator that the passengers whom he expected, were a young French gentleman by the name of Emile Briffault and his servant; thereby trying to create for himself a character for candour, though the baronet, who was not accustomed to feel such a virtue, thought he was rather over-innocent to be very trustworthy.

Sir Gerald did all he could under the circumstances; he placed a guard in the vessel—he quartered his men in the town, and sent patroles to ride up the different roads, thereby exemplifying another common and proverbial adage which sayeth:—"When the steed's

stolen we shut the stable door." Sir Gerald indeed, acted wisely enough for so wicked a man; but he had not, of course, calculated upon the shrewdness and activity of Goodman, which invaluable qualities had led that worthy man to set out for Yarmouth early on the preceding day, that he might be ready to assist the escape of his poor friends by keeping the captain to his bargain. This he had found no difficulty in doing; the daring seaman being exceedingly ready to forward the escape of the fugitives, and equally willing to cheat the government of a traitor, a matter that he had frequently done before, in the shape of a trifling portion of the revenue.

It is but of late years that correct notions have prevailed on the subject of smuggling, for up to a very recent period men of general probity and honor were so much mistaken as to imagine that a little dabbling in the fair trade, as it was called, was neither sin nor shame. The whole line of the eastern coast

abounded with smugglers and their haunts, and covert places were so well chosen and secured as not to be discoverable by the lynx eye of the law.

Goodman had spent the previous evening at a tavern, in company with the captain of the "Trusty Friend," who had introduced him to several persons, half-seafaring, half-agricultural men, who were pretty generally known by the inhabitants of Yarmouth to be extensively engaged in contraband trade: and though the good sense of the worthy farmer prevented him from being blinded altogether to the immorality of that illegal traffic, he was not unaffected by the temper of the times, and did not hesitate to associate with the friends of the captain of the "Trusty Friend," men who were received into honest and respectable society. Goodman was a man of extremely temperate habits, and he had some difficulty in escaping even at the expense of a slight headache, which the morning brought him, for the liquor passed rapidly

around; not the less so that it had not been branded with the broad arrow, that picturesque effect of excise legitimacy, but he would not disoblige the captain or his companions. His shrewd, sensible, and dry remarks gained him the good opinion and established him as a favorite with the whole party, and when he saw the dragoons and their commander make for the schooner, his active mind immediately reverted to these men. He instantly whispered to the captain, and was as instantly directed to apply to Peter Skoulding. The whisper was sufficient, and he hurried away, as we have seen, and was fortunate enough to meet with Blanche Stewart and her companion. He was, however, not a little surprised to find the exchange that had been made of good Mr. Springfield for James Burnet, but no time was to be lost. Peter Skoulding was a farmer, living on the coast close to the sea shore, and one of the principal agents in the contraband trade.

Turning out of the high road, Goodman led

his friends to Skoulding's dwelling, the situation of which had been accurately pointed out to him, as he had received an invitation to spend a day or two with his newly-made friend, after the expected embarkation of the fugitives. Fortunately, the farmer was not from home, though his fur cap and fustian coat, his dog and gun, as the party met him at his own threshhold, bespoke his intention of leaving. He comprehended in a moment the true state of the case, and immediately set himself to assist. The horses of the fugitives, which were much jaded with their night's work, he sent away by a boy, desiring him to turn them out among his own cattle, having first buried their saddles in a hayrick; then dismissing Goodman, with an injunction to mislead the dragoons if he should find an opportunity, he bade the fugitives follow him.

Goodman, feeling confident that his friends were in safe hands, trotted briskly away,

whilst Peter Skoulding led his visitors to some more secret haunt of smuggling adventure.

Meanwhile Sir Gerald Howard watched the fleeting time with extreme impatience. As the morning advanced he began to think that his object was in some way frustrated—that some accident had happened to detain those he sought. It was scarcely possible they could have been apprised of his approach. Such were his cogitations, and he determined not to lose sight of the captain of the schooner He cross-examined the sailors, he inspected the bills of lading; but all to no purpose. Noon arrived; he sent out parties to scour the country in all directions, to enquire at and search all the farm houses and places likely to have harboured the fugitives. At length he determined to make the captain sail; to do which there was an evident reluctance on the part of the man, who declared he should lose much for not waiting for his passengers. Then reports were abroad that the fleet of the Prince of Orange was on

the sea; all was evidently evasive. He had some motive no doubt for wishing to remain, but Sir Gerald was immovable, and all that the poor captain could obtain was permission to await the arrival of certain sea stores, which he professed to be expecting.

In the course of the afternoon Goodman, bespattered with mud, was seen walking up the principal street of Yarmouth—having left his pony at a small inn outside the town—looking as simple and unconcerned as if nothing had happened. Upon him Sir Gerald Howard immediately pounced, and a violent altercation ensued. The wily farmer had made a very large detour, and thus been able to approach the town by an opposite road to that he had traversed from Safewood Bay, being the same as that by which Sir Gerald and his dragoons came in the morning.

This meeting convinced Sir Gerald that the fugitives were not far off, and that they would approach by the same road; so he immediately despatched a party of soldiers in that

direction, thus taking off attention from the quarter to which they had fled. Goodman affected violent anger at being detained, and talked wondrously big about the liberty of the subject and illegal proceedings, but the baronet persisted in keeping him a close prisoner, consequently he could get no opportunity to communicate with his friend the captain. He ascertained, however, that the schooner had not sailed, so he bore his confinement with the best grace he could, and very bad indeed was the best.

As the day advanced parties of the dragoons came dropping in, but brought no news of the worthy clergyman and his charge. It was near midnight when the remainder of the soldiers came back, but without having gained the slightest intelligence, and the dawn found Sir Gerald stretched on a restless bed and the equally anxious Goodman pacing his chamber.

CHAPTER X.

WITH daylight a heavy lumbering was heard in the streets of Yarmouth, and a soldier came to announce the arrival of two carts with stores for the schooner. Sir Gerald Howard gave orders that they should not be permitted to drive to the quay until he was ready to go with them, and while he reassumed the few articles of dress he had laid aside, when he threw himself upon the bed, Driscol came to tell him that one of the Dragoons remembered to have seen Goodman before. He was that swift-stepped lanky man who had walked away from the harbour.

"Goodman," thought Sir Gerald, "is at

the bottom of the scheme," and he muttered sundry imprecations upon the old man, his ancient grudge against him having been revived by his appearance; but the baronet durst not openly do more than keep him captive, in which indeed, he was warranted by the state of the case. Goodman began to think he had placed himself in an awkward predicament, by his desire to ascertain the fate of his friends; and a little anxiety on his own account followed the reflection that he was in the clutches of so bitter an enemy, and so bad a man.

Convinced by the circumstance of Goodman's interference, that the captain of the schooner was in the interest of the fugitives, the baronet became the more anxious to watch the motions of that personage; but no better conduct presented itself to him than to urge the immediate departure of the vessel, as soon as these same stores were put on board; and by that means cut off the possibility of any communication with the object of his pursuit.

All that he had to fear, was lest the vessel should put in at some other port, and take the fugitives in; but this he imagined could only be done by a preconcerted plan, which must be by some means or other communicated to the parties, and this he hoped to be able, by a vigilant look-out, to prevent.

Sir Gerald and Driscol, being fully equipped, sallied forth. So circumspect was the baronet that he would not permit the peasants, who had brought the carts to drive them down to the harbour, lest, perchance, they might be the bearers of some communication; which, indeed, was not improbable. Driven, then, by dismounted dragoons, and followed by Sir Gerald and his satellite, the carts reached the water side.

The baronet's anxiety to secure his victims had risen to such a pitch of nervous excitement, that his whole demeanour became changed. He had reflected during the past night, that although pardoned by the government for his late criminal conduct, he must

still be the object of constant suspicion; and should the Rev. Mr. Springfield, one of his late associates, escape, it might be thought that he had in some way connived at it; whereas, by strenuous exertion in the business, he might recommend himself to further notice.

To the passions which have been before represented as urging him on, were now added this additional incentive; and Sir Gerald walked on, a pitiable specimen of mental and malignant excitation. Nor was his bodily condition much more enviable; his wounded leg was not yet thoroughly healed, though it was not sufficiently bad to impede exertion, but it occasionally gave him excruciating pain. He had been considerably weakened, too, by loss of blood and recent illness consequently present fatigue added much to his exhaustion, for the two last nights had been spent—one on horseback, the other on a sleepless bed. His face was pale and sallow — his eyes sunken and blood-shot, and his beard, which

had been unavoidably neglected, long and ragged.

Sir Gerald and Driscol went on board the schooner, and summoned the Captain from his cabin ; the sailors were not allowed to touch either the carts or their contents, as the soldiers had been ordered to bring those contents on board, and every packet was submitted to the careful inspection of Driscol, lest it should contain some letter or communication.

It was a scene of no ordinary description. The grey light of morning was shedding a pale illumination, and a thick mist was creeping up from the sea, which shut from view all but the present group. Two dragoons, who had been posted on the deck as sentinels for the second part of the night, walked listlessly to and fro, their carbines in the hollow of their arms; the anxious baronet, with his hollow eye and cadaverous brow, peering over the packages as they were opened by the less excited, and therefore, more acute,

Driscol; the captain of the schooner, standing with his arms folded, looking gloomily on; and the sailors hanging in the rigging, or sitting about the deck, watching, with sailor-like sneers, the soldier-like awkwardness of "them ere horse marines, or royal dragons, or whatsomever they called 'em."

Packet after packet was examined, and past to the hold, nothing but a few invoices being found amongst them. On one packet, however, there was a small inscription, scratched through with a pen, as though it had been an old address, but still legible—the words "Peter Skoulding, Safewood bay;" it was so well managed that Sir Gerald heeded it not, and even Driscol would have passed it over, but that upon a second glance at the packet, after it had been thrown to the sailor, he observed, as it lay on the deck, that the word "Safewood" had been rendered illegible as if by the rubbing of a wet thumb.

At length the whole of the packages were deposited in the hold, and Sir Gerald ordered

the vessel to be got under weigh. The Captain pointed to a small sloop at some distance, the sails of which, heavy with the mist, were flapping languidly against the cordage.

"Since you've frightened away my passengers, maybe, you'll whistle me a wind," he said, sullenly.

Sir Gerald was about to make an angry answer, but thinking better of it, he contented himself with insisting, in his Majesty's name, that he should sail as speedily as possible. The Captain muttered something about not knowing whether his Majesty would not soon change his name; but Sir Gerald paid no attention to him, and with his attendants, quitted the ship, still leaving a guard on the quay.

As they strode up the street, Driscol, coming close to his master, said—

"I think I can fathom their secret."

"What do you mean, Driscol?" demanded his master.

"Simply this—if you can tell me the

whereabouts of Safewood Bay, I will tell you where to secure the fugitives."

With that he detailed the result of his observations.

Sir Gerald listened with breathless attention, and agreed with Driscol that this place was in all probability the spot decided upon for the vessel to pick up its passengers, but that the greatest caution was necessary to be observed whilst acting upon that knowledge. The appearance of military in that neighbourhood, if it did not prevent the vessel from putting in, would certainly frighten the fugitives from the spot; and if, as was not unlikely, they were associated with the smugglers, they might effectually elude pursuit. The only plan was to allow the schooner to approach, and the fugitives proceed to meet her, and then to pounce upon them. This, however, would require much dexterity; and the amiable couple, as they walked up the street, concluded that the best plan was to send the dragoons off to Norwich, with the exception

of a chosen few, who might lurk about Safewood Bay until they saw the vessel. Another part of the plan was to release Goodman, who would doubtless find some means to apprise his friends, both of the sailing of the schooner and of the departure of the military, and thus take them off their guard.

As the sun rose over the sea, the mist speedily dispersed, and a light breeze springing up, the schooner got under weigh, and the guard came up to report to Sir Gerald that she had sailed. The baronet took care that this intelligence should be conveyed to Goodman, who soon after was informed that he was at liberty to depart.

Delighted, as well as surprised, at these tidings, the first use he made of his newly-acquired freedom, was to go down to the harbour, and ascertain the truth of the report. This he immediately perceived was correct, for the vessel was already at a considerable distance, standing out to sea. He saw that his friends' chance of escape was

for the present lost, and could only hope that some communication had been made, by which they might embark from some other part of the coast. He returned to the inn at which he had been confined, and there he found the dragoons drawn out in marching order. Judging it prudent to see as little as possible of Sir Gerald, he walked away; he soon witnessed the march of the troops, with the exception of about half-a-dozen, who were left at Yarmouth for the present, to watch Goodman's movements, as well as to keep a sharp look-out seaward, and to give immediate intelligence to Sir Gerald should the schooner return. Sir Gerald and Driscol rode off with the dragoons.

CHAPTER XI.

No sooner had Goodman witnessed the departure of Sir Gerald Howard and the Dragoons, than he again repaired to the harbour, with the desire of gaining further intelligence—not merely of the sailing of the "Trusty Friend"—but in the hope of recognising one or more of the persons with whom he had spent the evening at the tavern with the captain of the schooner; and feeling especially anxious to meet with the present kind protector of Blanche Stewart and Mr. Springfield.

With his usual keen-sightedness, he soon

found that it would be extremely imprudent to recognise any of his tavern friends, should he meet them; for he perceived that his steps were dogged by one of the dragoons, who had changed his military clothes for those of a civilian, but, though he had thus metamorphosed himself, his chin and upper lip displayed the moustache and the imperial worn by the soldiers, but not at all characteristic of the lower or middle classes of Englishmen at that period.

As he walked slowly and apparently full of deep thought by the water-side, he fancied he recognized, in the midst of a group of sailors and others, the features of Peter Skoulding, but in a costume very different to that in which he had hitherto seen him. He, however, neither stopped, nor in any way appeared to notice the party, but walked slowly on, his head bent down; still, as he passed, he thought he saw something like a nod of recognition from the person he had suspected of being the proprietor of

the farm at Safewood Bay, which convinced him that his surmise was correct.

Goodman, however, heeded it not, but continued his walk, with measured step and head lowered, thus giving the dragoon not the slightest cause to imagine that he was acquainted with any of the men he had passed; he walked on and on, the soldier following him at a short distance, till he approached the termination of the path, when he stopped and looked cross the sea, and put his hand up to his forehead, as if to direct his vision towards the horizon. The soldier was close upon him, and Goodman turning suddenly round encountered the man face to face, without the possibility of his avoiding him.

"Good day, my man," said Goodman, "can you tell me at what hour a schooner called the 'Trusty Friend,' went out of harbour?"

"The 'Trusty Friend,' the 'Trusty Friend,'" replied the dragoon, as if trying to recollect the name, but with something like

confusion in his countenance at being so suddenly spoken to. "No, I can't say that I have heard of a vessel of that name having left the harbour."

"Thank you; I thought, perhaps, as you are living in Yarmouth you might have known all about it."

"You are mistaken," said the dragoon. "I'm a stranger to Yarmouth; I came here from Norwich, about a fortnight since, to get a few sea breezes, for my health has been somewhat failing me of late."

"Your health failing you!" cried Goodman, looking steadily into the man's face. "Well, to my mind, now I look at you, you appear to me as robust and healthy, as one of those dragoon chaps that I saw as I came down the streets."

The man's forehead flushed; but instantly recovering himself, he said with a careless air—

"Do you think so; well, I don't know how a dragoon looks, but I can only say, I should

be sorry if he felt as badly as I do—my looks don't pity me."

"No, that they don't," said Goodman, "for you look as fresh and ruddy as the morn."

"Oh, yes," replied the man, "it's no use complaining, for nobody believes me. Why, one of my oldest friends told me one day when I was telling him of being poorly, that he should like to see me in my coffin, for he was sure I should have a good colour."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Goodman. "That was friendly. By the bye, as you came from Norwich, perhaps you can tell me which is the nearest road to that city, for I want to make my way thither early to-morrow morning."

"I fear I can give you no information, for I don't remember hearing the name of a single village through which the stage coach passed. Have you been long in Yarmouth?" he continued, "I don't remember having seen you before to-day."

"No," said Goodman, who wished to place the man at ease and entirely mislead him, "I have only been in Yarmouth a few hours: I came to see a couple of friends, who had taken berths in the 'Trusty Friend.' It is very unfortunate, for I can't tell if they are gone or not."

"That is unfortunate" said the Dragoon who now felt quite certain the old man had no suspicion about his identity. "So you don't intend staying in Yarmouth to get a mouthful or two of sea-breezes—that's a pity, unless your business in Norwich is urgent."

"So it is; but I have particular business in Norwich to-morrow morning, and must start early. I would have gone this evening, but I don't like travelling alone in the dark."

"What time in the morning do you intend going?"

"Immediately after breakfast; about eight o'clock."

"Why not get to Norwich before breakfast."

"I should have been glad to have gone off before breakfast, but I never feel comfortable the remainder of the day, if I travel before making a hearty meal."

They had approached the spot where the group of sailors and others before-mentioned were standing.

"Perhaps one of those men can tell me about the sailing of the 'Trusty Friend.'"

"Most likely they can, for they appear to have little else to do, but to watch ships going in and out of harbour."

"Would you mind asking one of them the question for me," said the wily old man, completely throwing dust in the dragoon's eyes.

"I would with pleasure, but I can't spare the time just now, for I promised a friend that I would meet him in the market-place about this time."

"I am sorry you can't wait a little longer,

for I should have been glad to have walked with you as far as the market-place."

"Perhaps we may meet again in the evening."

"Well, I scarcely think I shall go out of the inn again after I get back; I am accustomed to go early to bed, and as I shall want to be stirring by times in the morning, I don't intend remaining up after seven o'clock."

"That is early" said the soldier.

"Yes, yes, so it is; but you know the old adage, 'Early to bed and early to rise,' that's my maxim."

"Then, I'll bid you good day and, if I shouldn't see you again, I wish you a pleasant journey," saying which they parted, after shaking hands.

"That old fool, clever and far-seeing as he thinks himself, little suspects who he has been talking to," soliloquised the soldier.

"That shallow-pated fellow," chuckled Goodman, "will be on the look out early enough in the morning, and no doubt keep

his eye upon me till bed-time this evening, but after seven o'clock he will betake himself to his pot-companions, for the rest of the night."

By this time the soldier had walked a considerable distance and Goodman perceiving Peter Skoulding standing a few yards apart from his companions, walked towards him.

"Take no notice of me," said Skoulding, "but pass on to the group there. Meet me on the Lowestoft road at 10 o'clock to-night, I shall be mounted," and he turned his back on Goodman and walked away. The latter approached the group and after asking a few questions about the "Trusty Friend" followed the dragoon, who was still in sight, towards the market-place, but without the slightest intention of again accosting him.

CHAPTER XII.

Soon after sun-rise, on the second day after leaving Yarmouth with Skoulding, Goodman entered the farm-house of his new friend, by whom he was cordially welcomed. He at once advanced towards Blanche, who met him with pale cheeks and tearful eyes, and taking her cold trembling hand in his said:

"Cheer up, my lass, I could not let you go without coming to say good-bye, and bid God speed you on your voyage."

"Thanks! thanks! my earliest and best friend, for all your goodness; but good-bye will not be spoken between us to-day," said Blanche.

Goodman looked searchingly and wonder-

ingly into the young girl's face, whose eyes were red and swollen from excessive weeping, but there was such a quiet determination in the expression of the colourless lips and in the tones of the voice, that he could not mistake their true import.

"Tut! tut!" cried Goodman, letting his stick fall heavily on the floor, "what new freak of fancy has entered that wise head of yours!"

"Simply this," rejoined Blanche, putting her hand caressingly on the old man's shoulder, as she had been wont to do in her childish days when she wished to win him to her purpose, and looking into his face as if pleading pardon for what she feared would both vex and anger him, "I cannot—nay, I will not—leave England whilst James Burnet is in danger."

Again the old man's stick sounded on the floor, as he exclaimed with some warmth: "Who told you James Burnet was in danger? and if he be, what does it matter? the hot-

headed youth must suffer punishment for his folly."

"That may be quite right, Master Goodman: but is it the time to forsake a friend when he's beset by danger; you would not be guilty of such an act."

"Forsake a fiddlestick! What good can a child like you effect? I tell you, girl, you must flee from Sir Gerald Howard, as you would from a pestilence."

Blanche shook her head, as she continued: "For you to blame me is sad indeed, very sad; but I know you will not do so long. I know that the conspirators, with James Burnet at their head, have been arrested by the King's troops; that James is imprisoned, I know full well that he will be punished, punished perhaps by being shot—My God!" she continued, clasping her hands, "give me strength to be calm, to bear my trials. Knowing as I do all that has befallen James, can you blame, can you wonder at my determination to remain."

"I do wonder, and will not let you remain here, almost in the wolf's den. As for James Burnet, he has wrought you evil enough; and he deserves to suffer, if only for the change I see in you."

"I am changed," sighed Blanche, "and perhaps James may be to blame. But, my dear, kind friend, I cannot forget, that when I was belied, traduced, and in trouble, he braved danger to protect me. But to do that he would not have joined the faction. To be near me in my sorrow he refused to leave England. Would you have me act more selfishly?"

"Tut, tut, girl, you have no more reason in you than one of my geese. Listen to me and heed my words. James is in prison and where you cannot see him. If he should hear you are in England, and that villain Sir Gerald in pursuit of you, will not that knowledge add ten-fold to his anxieties? Would it not, on the other hand, greatly administer to his comfort, if he were assured

of your safety far away from his implacable and malignant enemy?"

"That may be quite true, but—"

"True, to be sure it is—and when he's released he can join you in Switzerland."

"But, if he should not be released—if he should be condemned to die!" she cried, clutching Goodman's arm so tightly as to make the worthy man start, "do you think I would let him suffer and not be by his side to tell him how long he has been my world, my earthly idol. Oh! my dear friend, there is nothing else you could ask that I would not cheerfully do to please you; but forsake James, in the hour of his dire distress and danger, I will not—I will not," and she hid her face on Goodman's shoulder, sobbing violently—convulsively.

For a minute no one spoke, and Blanche's tears fell faster and faster—the sailor's wife, good, kind-hearted Hannah Skoulding, came

and leaned over her speaking words of comfort, though large drops fell from her eyes on the bright hair of the weeping girl. Peter retreated to the window, raised his telescope and gazed upon the ocean in the vain attempt to divert his thoughts. He wiped the glass, then his eyes, till finding both continue misty and dim, he turned and fixed his gaze upon Goodman, of whom he felt too much awe to address.

Goodman, half in anger, half in sorrow, stood irresolute and perplexed: till observing Peter's look, he exclaimed, placing Blanche on a chair: "Perhaps, my good friend, you may have had wilful children and can advise me how best to induce this obstinate child to do as she is bid."

Peter shook his head, saying, "If you ask my advice, I say let her follow the dictates of her own kind and feeling heart."

"Feeling, fiddlestick!" cried Goodman, "Much good I have got asking your advice. Come, Blanche, lift up your head and leave

off crying. What would Susan Burnet say to your obstinacy ?"

Blanche started to her feet, dashing the tears from her eyes and throwing back the long curls from her face—"Susan Burnet, oh! she is good, so good, so kind; she came to me and soothed and supported me in my bitter grief; she saw the last breath leave the lips of my dearly loved relative; she went with me to her grave; I reverence and regard her as little beneath the angels. But, farmer Goodman, Susan Burnet cannot feel as Blanche Stewart does now. She had a happy childhood tended in luxury and love; mine was tenderly nurtured, but in poverty and want;—her youth and girlhood passed with loving parents and admiring friends; mine with a cold, heartless woman, from whom I found no relief, but in a visit to my poor grandmother. On these occasions, when sharing her crust, I was happy and joyous, for God gave me high spirits the better to bear the scorn, the taunting and ill-humour I

was subject to at Lady Esther's. Then came James and his love, to enable me to carry my burden with less difficulty. Bitter, bitter tears have I shed for his errors and the thorns I felt as I trod the path of love; still, he was my only comfort, and I loved him the more that no other ever shared even my friendship. You cannot tell how happy, yet how miserable he made me. His parents scorned me ; even you—you who have been a father to me—you blamed me—you who thought more kindly of the despised girl than any other. Think how different has been Susan's fate; her love is sanctioned by her parent's blessing, her friends' approbation. There is no comparison between us. She can act rightly because no rebellious feeling can prompt otherwise; she has never been maligned, crossed, and scolded. She may be proud of her love, proud to own it, whilst I ;" she stopped a few moments to recover breath, and then resumed with all her characteristic petulance, " I have forgotten all faults in

James, and only remember that he has caused my happiest moments. I feel proud of an affection which, 'midst all temptations, has never swerved from me. Susan would not blame me."

Again she paused.

"Upon my life, girl, I thought your tongue would never cease. I wish, Blanche, you would talk less and act more sensibly. I tell you, once for all, you must quit England for a time."

The poor girl clasped his hands, saying, "Oh! Master Goodman, in pity—in mercy let me stay, or take me to James's prison."

"Worse and worse," interrupted Goodman, "you are wasting precious time. I will no longer listen to you."

"Then do you speak for me, good, kind Mrs. Skoulding—you have told me of your trials in early life, when your husband was in danger of being imprisoned for secreting smugglers and their cargoes. Had he been taken from you and thrown into gaol would

you have forsaken him and returned to your early home—would you have left him you loved in peril ?"

Mrs. Skoulding turned her eyes, flashing with all a wife's love and devotion, towards her husband, as she answered quietly :

"I would have followed him not only to prison, but to the world's end; you are right, my dear, not to forsake one you love; nor will this good gentleman urge you to do so any longer. You can stay with us awhile, and just assist me in my household duties, and Peter will be glad of your company of an evening to sing and read to him; and he will, perhaps, be able to assist you in getting a sight of the young man you love so well; for there are few prisons in these parts that the jailors wouldn't do him a favour in return for trifles he has procured for them, which they dared not buy."

"Right, right wife," exclaimed Peter, coming to his wife's side and giving her a hearty kiss, "spoken like yourself; we have weathered

many brisk gales together, and loved each other well. There is no fear for the lassie if she keeps within doors. As to that villain, Sir Gerald Howard, why, I can hide her where neither he nor all the King's dragoons could find her; and as for Sir Gerald's craftiness, he will find that I am more than his match any day. I have been used to too much of that metal myself not to know the chink of it in others. Come, cheer up, child, cheer up; I owe you something for bringing you such news. I little thought that it would afflict you so. When the boat is off with the parson, I'll go to Norwich and beat about the prison for news of the young man. Don't cry, child, I can't bear to see tears."

This was a long speech for Peter, who generally acted on the motto—"Silence is gold;" but it produced a good effect upon Goodman, whose own heart had pleaded as powerfully for Blanche as her tears. His fear for her safety, however, still induced him to urge her departure with Mr. Springfield, and

he called the worthy clergyman to his aid. But his arguments were of no avail, for Mr. Springfield shook his head as he answered :

" My good friend, I cannot agree with you. I cannot see the necessity for sending the child away. In your anxiety for her safety in England you overlook the trials she must go through, with such sorrow in her heart, in a strange country and among strangers. She has been no conspirator, and except from Sir Gerald Howard she has nothing to fear; and from such a monster our good friend has promised to guard her, and I know that he will do so effectually. Be under no apprehension that she will do aught to discredit your friendship or your affection. Blanche Stewart has innate good principles; her somewhat impulsive and rebellious spirits are subdued by sorrow, and she is fitted to take a warm-hearted woman's part in the hour of trial, ay, and to enact the heroine's, if need be."

Blanche looked gratefully at the speaker,

and then turned to Goodman and saw she had conquered.

"Well—well!" ejaculated the old man, placing both his hands on his stick, "what my pastor wills I must obey. Thomas Goodman has never been one of the rebellious of thy flock, and now that the clouds are lowering o'er ye, he'll not gainsay your wish. I dare say you are right—that the lassie is discreet and wise; I know nothing of women's ways, I never could manage them. When these disturbances are over, and your reverence returns to Thorpeton (and I pray heaven it may be soon), you shall give me your receipt to cure wilfulness, as you said. Now that this girl is discreet and wise, she will require no further care of mine."

Blanche sprung to Goodman's side—"Oh! say not so, say not so, I shall require your care and your love more than ever. Rather than forfeit your affection and esteem, I will go, though my heart break ere I reach the vessel; but do not put me to such a trial."

Goodman released one of his hands, which he placed round Blanche's waist, saying: "Heaven forbid, my child—heaven forbid that I should add to your trials. I know not what his reverence has done to change you, but I would rather see you the little torment you once were, than the staid woman you are now. Come, my child, dry your eyes, and I will give you as much esteem as any old farmer can give to a troublesome gadfly."

Blanche kissed his hand, but spoke not; for a man appeared at the window to announce that the "Trusty Friend" was in sight, and a boat ready to receive the gentleman.

The parting between Goodman and Mr. Springfield was full of sincere regret—the latter sending messages to many of his flock, and kind wishes for their well-doing, and hopes that he might return and die amongst them. He spoke of James Burnet as of a dearly loved son, and bade the farmer be his champion and his friend, and tell him that should

he be released to come to him to his Swiss home, where he should be none the less welcome if Blanche accompanied him as his wife. He bade her remember his lessons, and then seeing Peter impatient, gave them all his blessing, and departed; Mrs. Skoulding and Peter accompanying him to the water's edge.

Blanche's tears could not be restrained, and Goodman was silent, but not the less affected. In the former there was less of anguish in the expression of her countenance, and more of hope and resolve. The pastor's farewell words had given her a new idea. Her resolve was to become the means of procuring her lover's freedom, whilst the hope told of a life in other lands; James become a good man and a good Christian, whilst she, as his wife, must each day seek to be more worthy, more loving, to atone to him for the loss of father, mother, and sister—that sister who should be her model. To realise such a picture was worth a struggle, and she would

struggle bravely, untiringly, and with constant prayers for success.

Meanwhile her companion stood meditating deeply, but on a different theme. He had been foiled, and he was both vexed and pleased that it had been so. His fears for Blanche were lightened, but his anxiety for James was doubled. He had tried to persuade himself that all his care for the son was only from regard for the father; but now he inwardly acknowledged that the young man had become very dear to him, almost as dear as his god-daughter, and that he could make great sacrifices to save him. He would go to old Burnet and relate how highly he was spoken of by all those who had witnessed his heroic bearing in the hour of danger, and what importance he had given to the cause he had espoused, though he was stigmatised as a traitor. He would repeat the pastor's parting testimony, and bid the father prepare the fatted calf, and go out to meet,not the returning prodigal, but a son who would be the pride

of one, who was my playfellow in early days, shall be unto me as a daughter."

"Oh, Master Goodman," sobbed Blanche, piteously, "we do not part for long; you will come here again soon and bring me tidings. Should my fond hopes be crushed, I will return to you as your widowed daughter—seek repose in solacing and administering to your comfort."

"Plague on thee, imp," cried Goodman, with a return of his old manner, dashing the tears from his eyes, "Come as Blanche Stewart, who laughed at my chidings, and coaxed to naught my scoldings. I do not understand thy present mood, any more than I do myself. Teaze me—laugh at me—but do not let me see those silly tears. There," and again he stooped and kissed her forehead, "let me go, let me go; I promise to come again."

He left the house, and Blanche sat silent a few minutes on the chair in which Goodman had placed her; then rising, she went to

Peter, and thanked him in sweet tones and simple words for his promised protecton. Afterwards, kissing his wife, said:

"My kind friend, let me go and rest awhile, to think over my great sorrow, and thank my God for raising up to me such kind good friends, in my hour of need. In a very short time I will return to you, and be ready for my duties as a child of the house," and after receiving a fond pressure of the hand from Hannah, she left the room.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE wily baronet, by very cautious questions, had ascertained that Safewood Bay was a small curve of the sea, not very distant from Lowestoft.

After riding three or four miles from Yarmouth, Sir Gerald sent the troop forward, with the exception of about a dozen picked men, and then he and Driscol, with the selected dragoons, turned and rode steadily on towards Lowestoft, which place they reached soon after mid-day and halted there for the night. Here it was that they first heard the exciting intelligence that the insurgents had been dispersed, Oakfield Hall taken posses-

sion of by Colonel Bridgenorth, and the ring-leaders made prisoners by the royal army.

Despite excitement and irritability, Sir Gerald, jaded and wearied out, this night slept soundly, and next morning arose refreshed, to pursue his diabolical machinations.

At Lowestoft he took the precaution to procure plain clothes for his men, and ordering them to meet him that night at a small village some three miles distant, sent them off by different routes He and Driscol rode directly thither, and employed themselves in ascertaining the nature of the locality, and in hiring an eight-oared boat. At the appointed time the dragoons had all arrived and entered the boat, which was ordered to be pulled some considerable distance along the coast, and at dawn of day they were landed near the point of land which formed the eastern projection of Safewood Bay. Here the fishing boat was drawn ashore, and ordered to remain in case of need, while Sir Gerald and

his followers sought the concealment of a wood, which skirted the bay. To this wood, Sir Gerald ordered six of the dragoon's horses to be brought, the rest to remain at Lowestoft.

By scrambling to the top of a point of land, Sir Gerald obtained an extended view of the sea, and having provided himself with a telescope, he could mark the approach of any vessel. The day, however, became very hazy, and before long, set in to that steady, even, unbroken rain, which sometimes begins in such a business-like way, as if it were never going to be fine again.

This haze not only shut out the sea from Sir Gerald's view, but when he went down to the shore prevented him from seeing half a dozen yards out to sea. He became vexed and angry with himself and all around, and revenged himself with finding as much fault as possible with the soldiers, who had brought some camp furniture to the place and made themselves as comfortable as the

state of the weather and the ill-temper of Sir Gerald would admit. An old ruin in the midst of the wood, a part of which was in tolerable repair, furnished shelter from the rain; with an abundance of food, and a super-abundance of liquor, they contrived to wile away the day. It rained incessantly,—

"From morn till noon, from noon till dewy eve;"—

a comfortless night succeeded, but the following morning, as if to make up for its predecessor, was as fine and bright as any man could wish. Sir Gerald was early at his post, and events occurred which positively would be most unbecoming to relate at the end of a chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE morning was one of those so often seen in the latter part of autumn, calm, still, brilliant, when Sir Gerald Howard, from the top of the point of land where he had posted himself, with all his perseverance of deadly hate and fiendish malignity, by the aid of his telescope perceived a sail, answering to the description of the schooner, appear in the distance. The wind was light and baffling, yet the vessel was evidently making for the shore, and as there was no port, no place of any importance on that part of the coast nearer than Yarmouth or Lowestoft, Sir

Gerald felt convinced that the object of those in the ship must be to pick up the fugitives.

It is well for man that he cannot generally sympathise with the emotions of deep, fervent, intense hatred; but we know from many instances that when once the baneful emotions get the ascendancy over a man, they are fervent, constant, and as enduring as the benign. Instances are not wanting in which men have made sacrifices as deep to hatred and revenge as to love. Sir Gerald was utterly hopeless of being able to retrieve his fortunes; even ambition seemed dead in him. Of fear he knew nothing; his whole soul, his every thought was centred in diabolical hate. He hated with such intensity that the bare possibility of obtaining his purpose made him almost breathless. He summoned Driscol to his side; made him observe the vessel, and gave him the most minute directions how to act. Again and again did he reiterate to his villanous but faithful attendant, his command to conceal half the

dragoons in the wood, and on no account to appear until his signal should be heard, and then to make the utmost speed to the boat and put to sea; while the other half of the men should mount their horses, and gallop to the shore; feeling assured by this scheme he should secure the fugitives either by sea or land.

Sir Gerald would steal down to the beach; there were rocks enough to hide behind, and even if he were seen from the ship a single figure would not perhaps excite alarm or suspicion. He would steal down to the shore and watch the boat fairly afloat, for premature attack would spoil all. If they caught a glimpse of the soldiers before they embarked the fugitives might escape. Escape! they should not escape. No, no; he would not be duped, he would not be disappointed. He would sacrifice his life, his body, his soul, rather than not triumph. There was something in the eye and air of Sir Gerald that startled even

his old attendant Driscol, something almost preter-natural in this devilish, appalling thirst for the gratification of hate, apart from all personal advantage. In the mixed motives which generally urge men to act, it is seldom that a pure spirit of malignity becomes the sole incentive; malice, for the sake of malice, is not often the work of man, and seems only to form the characteristic of the fiend, and truly there was something in the face of Sir Gerald Howard which gave it a most fiendish, diabolical expression.

He took another glance at the ship, which had altered its course; and the baronet, in the bitterness of his disappoitment, gnawed his lip until the blood came from it. A long, long, wistful gaze, a laugh, hollow and suppressed, the schooner was evidently standing off and on, in expectation for some signal from the shore. There was a signal flag flying at her mast-head, and no doubt it would be answered. Another flag was run up hastily, and then both came down. It

was evident that some correspondence was kept up with persons on shore; yes, it was certain, for the vessel shaped her course directly in shore, and presently lay to; shortly after a boat was lowered.

"No time must now be lost," said Sir Gerald, "away with you, Driscol; draw a part of the men down to the very verge of the wood, and as near the boat as you can without being seen from the vessel; have the others ready to mount and intercept the return of the fugitives, and do you exert every nerve, and pull for your lives upon the ship's boat. If you see the most remote chance of their escaping, fire, fire, fire, Driscol, and send them all to the bottom if you can. But, mark you! mark you! they may linger some time on shore; perhaps our friends have an interest in the free trade, and will do a little business on their own account—if so all the better! all the better! the boat will be heavier. Now, mind you, Driscol, lie still, if it be for hours, or we may frighten them to

their haunts again. Lie still for my signal, this bugle of the trooper's shall give it you. Away with you, Driscol, away with you: it may be minutes or it may be hours, but for your life appear not till we have them completely in our toils; ha! ha! ha!"

Sir Gerald laughed aloud, and waving Driscol to his post, himself set out for the seashore. Long before he left the shadow of the woods he stole along as though he feared discovery.

At length he reached the beach, and crouching down behind a piece of rock, could see the ship still lying to, and the boat, much nearer to the shore, making for a headland at some distance from him. The woods at that spot crept low down upon the beach, and were only separated from the shingly shore by a narrow slip of greensward. Nearer to the sea, and forming the line between high and low water-mark, a mass of rocks, of every variety of fantastic forms, stretched along the shore. At spring tides these were sometimes

insulated, and occasionally covered; but in ordinary cases the water only found its way through certain crevices and fissures, and formed little pools of water, which ran off at low tide.

If Sir Gerald could reach the rocks he felt certain of being secure from observation, for he could then crouch among their numerous crevices. There were several scattered masses upon the sand, and keeping one or other of these as much as possible between himself and the ship, he stole across the narrow green sward, and, unobserved by any one, gained the rocks. Here he threw away his hat, the better to peep, unseen, from his cover.

It was about half-tide and the sea coming in; a very slight breeze just rippled its bright surface, and when it broke upon the sand, it was with so small a wave as scarcely to create a murmur; but on the rocks it swelled with a hollow roar, occasioned chiefly by running up the numerous fissures which its restless

waves had made, and boiling in the many chasms into which the mass of rocks had, in the course of ages, by the incessant action of the sea, been hollowed out.

The rocks in some places were as high as a man, and in others, were worn into very deep cavities, so that Sir Gerald stood little chance of detection, though from his hiding-place he could discern that a man was stationed with a glass, on the bow of the vessel; and he was the more disposed to congratulate himself upon his precaution in keeping back his men. The only object on the whole line of coast, as far as the eye could reach, was the large fisherman's boat, which was to be used as the means of capture.

Sir Gerald stole from rock to rock as long as he could see the ship's boat making for the land, until it disappeared behind an adjacent head-land; and he calculated that when it re-appeared, it would be the precise time for his signal, as the distance was sufficient for his larger and more numerously manned boat

to intercept the flight by sea, before the fugitives could reach the ship, while they would have got far enough out to enable the dragoons to line the shore.

It was a period of intense suspense, and Sir Gerald sat down behind a mass of rock, taking out his watch every few minutes, and almost believing that it had stopped every time he looked at it. He kept a steady gaze upon the sea—an anxious determination of purpose in his mind, and yet he could not prevent that mind from wandering over a thousand scenes of bygone days, or his eye from entering into all the minutiæ of the scene around him. He noticed the number of limpets sticking on the rock, and tried to remove one or two with the heel of his boot. He watched a small crab making for the little pool near his hiding place, and strove to catch it. He started at the scream of a sea-gull, which wheeled up from a cleft beside him;—he was nervously alive to trifles around, yet deeply, firmly bent upon his devilish purpose.

The rocks around him were sharp and jagged where the sea seldom covered them, but smooth and rounded where they were constantly exposed to the action of the waves. Sir Gerald noticed this fact, and began to calculate how far the sea came, and what points were exposed even at high water, and how much was bare at low. He had even leisure to pluck a fern which found sustenance among those rugged rocks, though his eye and his soul, too, were both intent upon the sea.

At length there was a speck upon the bright surface of the water; it was the boat returning to the vessel. The time was come, and Sir Gerald started to his feet,—concealment was now at an end—his prey was in his power. He grasped the bugle, he thought he could distinguish his victims in the boat. Yes, he thought—as he ran heedlessly along the rocks, his eyes fixed upon the boat, to be sure before he sounded—but a stunning frightful fall well nigh prevented the power of thought—the sharp and fan-

tastic rocks were slippery with sea-weed, and Sir Gerald lay crushed and bruised, and stunned in a deep fissure of the craggy shore. Some moments elapsed ere he could remember anything, and then he found himself lying in his blood; his recently wounded leg broken and powerless. He lay among the huge stones, in a kind of chasm, which had been hollowed out by the waves; behind him rose the rocks, sharp, perpendicular, to more than his own height; before him stretched the sea. His late purpose was, for the moment forgotten; he knew not how he came there, what he was doing there; all he felt was a sense of most acute and fearful pain, and faint sickness, from the loss of blood. For a time, he lost all knowledge or sight of things around him—one dull grey blank spread over every object, and then came back the rocks behind and beside, and the sea before him. He tried to rise, but he was utterly powerless, and the mere attempt put him to the most excruciating agony. Then came the dull,

deadening vacuum again, closing in, not only upon his bodily senses, but around his mental faculties—a leaden stupor, in which he felt neither pain, nor fear, nor rage, nor sorrow.

Sir Gerald is awake again, and memory is arousing herself too. His purpose, and his failure, and his fall, are all vividly before him. He is foiled, he is disappointed; the bugle has been thrown far from him in the shock of his fall; he cannot give the signal, he cannot even apprise his followers of his accident. His shattered limb seems to chain him to the cold stone, as Prometheus was bound to the rock; and rage, and disappointment, and desperation are gnawing at his heart with greater force than even did the eagle of Prometheus on the entrails of its prey. The miserable man tries to rise, but either imagination deceives him, or his leg has really become a part of that rock; it is as cold, as dead, as senseless. He bursts into a paroxysm of rage, he utters the most fearful

imprecations upon himself and all around; but this energy is too much for his enfeebled frame, and again he sinks into a lethargic stupor.

The salt spray of the restless sea sprinkled Sir Gerald's face; the fresh breeze fanned his locks, and he again awoke to consciousness; he awoke, as if from a pleasant sleep, but with the remembrance of frightful dreams—dreams that have startled us from sleep to the happy consciousness that they were but dreams. But the frightful visions which had scared Sir Gerald, seemed to have past before his last sweet and pleasant sleep; they seemed deep in the night, and this was the cheerful morning; but grey, and misty, and monotonous. It was only by degrees that the wretched baronet became entirely conscious of externals, and then the rocks appeared to close in around him again—and the sea—Sir Gerald started, and that start brought back the agony of his body, and the terrible anguish of his mind.

He remembered everything, but all then was obliterated in a new horror—the sea! It was splashing his face, it was rustling beside his stony pillow, it was rising! he had not hitherto thought of that; but it was, it must be rising; the long streamers of sea-weed that he had noticed dry and hard were now waving in the water; the white stones that before lay at some distance bare and dry, were now looking like flashes of light in the ripple. The tide was coming in! He cast one hurried and horror-stricken glance at the rocks behind; they were all smooth and rounded by the action of water, they were all encrusted with thousands of minute shells; there was sea-weed streaming above his head; the truth was evident—that he was below high-water mark!

One fierce, wild effort of fear, horror, rage, and desperation was partially successful; Sir Gerald actually arose and dragged his wounded leg to the limits of the chasm in which he had been lying, but the rocks were

so high, so perpendicular—worse! they were worse, for the wear of the water had hollowed them out into a projecting form, which was more difficult to climb than the perpendicular. It would have been a hard task for an active man, and to Sir Gerald it was hopelessly and absolutely impossible. Spent by his late fearful effort he sank down a prey to horror and despair! The conviction that *he*—he who had escaped a thousand dangers, must be drowned—drowned as it were by inches—came upon him in all its horror. He howled, he raved, he called upon his companions until he became too hoarse to speak, but there was none but his merciless and slowly advancing foe—the sea—coming steadily on, and roaring, as it came, louder than he! He thought of the injunction he had given Driscol, not to stir but at the concocted signal; and thus he believed he had signed his own death-warrant. As he thought so, he laughed aloud in frantic desperation!

From the place into which he had fallen,

Sir Gerald could see nothing of either the ship or the boat; nothing but the rocks and the sky, and the coming—coming sea. He could form no idea whether he had lain hours or minutes in his agony; it seemed the former, but it must have been the latter, because the sea was coming in when he came to the shore, and it was not at present anything like high tide. He knew that full well, and he laughed again a frenzied laugh of dismay and horror. Then he thought of the purpose that brought him to the sea-shore, of the innocent and artless Blanche Stewart, the benevolent and harmless, Mr. Springfield, whom he would have betrayed.

Next came rushing into his mind all the evil he had done, all the atrocious crimes he had committed, all the blood he had spilt—blood which he knew that the advancing sea could not wash out of his soul. Oh, horrible sight! he perceived that the stone whereon he so lately lay was now breaking the first

wave, and that the blood which had trickled from his wound was tinting the green waters. He thought—he knew, that it would soon reach his feet—his breast—his head—it would cover them all in succession, and the bitterness of death came upon his guilty soul. He drew himself up, undergoing intense pain, into a sitting posture: the water would be a little longer ere it reached him; he squeezed himself up as close as he could against the hard rock, and there he sat watching the restless waves come on.

Driscol waited long in silent suspense for the appointed signal, but no signal was heard to ring in the air; he listened eagerly for any sound, and once he thought he heard a cry of distress, but the next moment he was convinced it was but the note of some sea bird. He waited so long that his patience was entirely exhausted, and then he ventured so far to disobey his master as to stealthily steal out to a point whence he could see the sea. All appeared quiet; he heard nothing but the

murmur of the waves, and saw nothing but the schooner far away from the shore, its light sails fading into the distant horizon.

Driscol was convinced that something must have happened to disconcert his master's plans, and he gave orders to the men immediately to scour the coast. They did so, but there was nothing to be seen—nothing but the full tide breaking in on the rocks, and—when it went out again—the mangled body of Sir Gerald Howard entangled in the weeds.

CHAPTER XV.

Some weeks had passed since Mr. Springfield's departure, and Blanche Stewart continued to reside under Peter Skoulding's hospitable roof. These had been weeks of great anxiety to the sorrowing girl, though relieved once or twice by cheering gleams of sunshine. Peter had been frequently to Norwich, and had prowled about the prison, to which James Burnet and the Independent had been removed. In his character of smuggler he had sought his old acquaintances the turnkeys, from whom he acquired news of the prisoners' health, at the same time declaring

he cared nothing about them, and did not even know them, but that he was acquainted with the sweetheart of young Burnet—as pretty a lass as any in Norfolk or Suffolk—who was breaking her heart; and he should like to tell her something to comfort and cheer her up a bit.

"Well," replied the man he addressed, whose heart softened at the picture presented to his mind of a 'pretty girl in tears,' "you can tell the poor thing the young man is well, and takes his rations without grumbling, which is what few of 'em ever does. He's very pious, and reads his Bible famously; howsomever, he never preaches to us as the other chap who is with him does, so we all likes him best."

Bright were the drops which fell from the eyes of Blanche, when Peter returned with this intelligence, slight as it was; that James was well, was a source of great comfort to her. Hope again rose to the surface, and gave increased alacrity to the small fingers

so busily engaged in embroidering a cushion for Peter's elbow chair.

Another month passed, during which Peter made scarcely any mention of the business which called him so often from home. Hannah never grumbled at his absences, and Blanche alone anxiously watched his countenance, when he returned, to see if there was an answering look to her glance of enquiry, only to turn away with a sigh at the stolid indifference that met her gaze.

Wearily at such times would Blanche seek her little chamber and there weep tears of disappointment. An earnest longing for happiness would render her impatient, and with all her natural petulance she would clasp her hands and plan schemes for getting into the prison in disguise, assist James to escape, or die at his feet rather than be forced to leave him again. The murmur of the sea as it washed the shore, not far from the house, generally soothed this irritation, and recalled Mr. Springfield's constantly re-

peated maxim, to "trust, humbly pray, and wait God's will in patience," bringing a calmer, holier feeling to her troubled spirit; and in low sad tones she would sing the song she had so often warbled to her lover during their many interviews in the Oakfield woods.

These struggles, however, were not encountered without loss of health. The fading colour, the dejected step, the dull eye, told of much anxiety and bitter tears shed unseen. Peter did all he could to soothe and amuse her, whilst Hannah played a kind mother's part, and was always rewarded by the energy with which Blanche would for a time enter into her domestic occupations.

"Good-bye, lass," said Peter, as he was mounting his horse one morning, "I am going a long ride over the country; so keep Hannah in good humour, and don't let her get fidgetty if I should be late to-night."

"Late!" cried Blanche, with a sudden impulse, "tell me—where are you going? why should you be late?"

"Because I may meet with those who may detain me. So ask no more questions. Good-bye," he repeated, and taking some blossoms of laurestinas she held in her hand just gathered, he rode rapidly off.

Blanche kept her gaze fixed upon him till he was out of sight, and then pressing her hands upon her temples, in a low voice ejaculated:

"Father in Heaven, how grateful I feel for the hope Thou hast just vouchsafed to me. That worthy, excellent friend is gone to try and serve me! Do Thou, oh! merciful Father, bless his efforts!"

With a more buoyant spirit and more elastic step she re-entered the cottage and sat down to her embroidery, working assiduously. The fingers were busily engaged, but the thoughts passing through the worker's mind wove themselves into as many forms as the fingers placed upon the canvass. Considerable time elapsed ere she looked up, and when she did she observed Hannah Skoulding gazing

earnestly at her. Blanche's face flushed as she asked:

"Are you looking so earnestly at me or my work, dear Mrs. Skoulding?"

"At your work, my child. The flowers are as natural as those that grow in the garden. Where did you learn to do work such as I thought only high-born ladies knew anything about. Why, I declare, 'tis the Queen's own stitch, I know it well, for my young ladies used to do it; but then they come of the same family as the Queen."

"What, the ladies you talk of going to see in a few days? Are they good? are they kind?" asked Blanche, earnestly.

"Yes, my dear, as good as they are kind," replied Hannah, wondering at the girl's earnest manner. "They would do any one a kindness; and so would their brother, the young lord."

"Mrs. Skoulding," said Blanche, impressively, "when you go to see these ladies take me with you. If they are of the Queen's

family, and so good, they might plead for James. I would tell them the whole tale of his being mixed up with the conspirators, and that he's no traitor at heart, and does not deserve imprisonment."

"Do you think you could tell all that to real high-born ladies?" asked Hannah.

"Yes, if they are good and kind, as you say they are. I fear no great ladies, but Lady Esther Vince."

"Well, now," said Hannah, speaking more to herself than to Blanche, "only to think that I should have stood here wishing my ladies could see that work, because they give plenty of money for some not half as beautiful; it is too good for Peter's old chair, though I like him to be comfortable; but only to think that I should be so stupid as not to remember they could, perhaps, be of use to the poor young man. Anyhow, they could speak about him to the Duke at Norwich. I wonder what Peter would say to my taking you with me? I could just speak

a few words to the young ladies, and I'm sure they would listen to you, aye, and comfort you, too, if they could. I had thought of telling them about you, but I never dreamt of their doing any good to the young man. I only thought of getting money for the work."

"Never mind what you thought," cried Blanche, with some of her former impetuosity, "my work will be finished to-morrow, and then let us go immediately."

"We must wait till Peter comes home, child. I never decide upon anything without consulting him. I will sit beside you and talk over the matter whilst you work."

They did talk, that old woman and the young girl, long and earnestly—Blanche with a newly-created hope, Hannah with earnestness, half-smiling to think how surprised Peter would be at "his old woman" forming schemes.

Thus the day passed, Blanche busily plying her needle, Mrs. Skoulding doing nothing but

talk, unwittingly giving her young charge an insight into the characters of those to whom she was to be introduced. So overcome was she with the responsibility she had determined to take upon herself, that her domestic duties were completely forgotten, until, at Blanche's suggestion, the dinner was placed on the table; and no sooner was that meal over, than the work and the talk were again renewed, and neither Blanche nor Hannah noted the passing hours, till the dusk of evening compelled the former to leave off working.

It was late when Peter came home. He met Blanche's look of enquiry with his usual nod of indifference; but in reply to his wife's emphatically expressed pleasure at his return, he said—

"Why! old woman, what did you think had happened to me? Here I am, safe and sound, with a fairing for both of you in my pocket, which you shall see as soon as I have had my

supper. So let us begin; and when we have finished and the decks are cleared, I will tell you all I have seen and heard."

To Blanche this supper seemed as if it would never end. Peter's appetite, she thought, would never be appeased. She felt, as she had done all day, that she was about to hear something of James; and her heart throbbed wildly.

At length Peter declared himself satisfied, and stirring the fire into a bright blaze, took his pipe from the shelf, prepared to enjoy a peaceful hour, which however, was very soon interrupted by Hannah, saying—

"But what about the fairings, Peter; come, let us see what you have brought us."

"Well! old woman, as you are soon going to pay your respects to your young ladies, and as the young lord is at home, I thought you would want a new cap, so I bought you some fine ribbons, to make you look as young as a 'three-year-old,'" and he placed a paper parcel in his wife's lap.

"And now, child," he continued, turning to Blanche, "come alongside, and see what I have got for you."

Blanche drew near, and a second paper parcel was produced, and slowly unfolded, when a piece of light blue ribbon, tied in a peculiar manner, was displayed.

Peter was not prepared for the effect the sight of this ribbon produced. Blanche started to her feet, the blood rushing over neck and face, only to recede the next instant, and leave her ashy pale.

"Where did you get that?" she cried, speaking with the utmost difficulty. "He would never part with it in life!"

"Only think, now," said Peter, in bewilderment, "I have frightened the poor child, when I thought only to make her happy."

"Oh! tell me!" cried Blanche, in an agonised tone, "Does he live?"

"Live! to be sure he does," said the farmer, "and what's more he's likely to live. I have seen him —"

"Seen him!" almost shrieked Blanche, "and he is well—quite well!"

She burst into a violent fit of tears, which, after a few minutes' indulgence, relieved her pent-up feelings, and she turned to Peter with a smiling countenance, saying—

"Kind, good friend, tell me everything, for I cannot understand how you got possession of that ribbon."

"Well—well, lassie,so I will, if you'll smile and don't cry; I can't bear to see your tears. So, now, sit you down, and I'll spin you a long yarn, only I must do it in my own way. Ever since the day my friend the turnkey talked to me about the prisoners, I have tried hard to induce him to let me see them, but he told me it was impossible, for there were strict orders that no one should speak to them, or visit them; and that it was as much as his place was worth, in fact as much as his head was worth, even to take a message.

"Well, I puzzled my poor brains to know what could be done, for I couldn't bear to

see you look so pale and dull, and I thought I'd try another tack. I took some 'baccy in my pocket the next time I went to Norwich, and prowled about more than half the day before I could get an opportunity of speaking with the turnkey, but at last he came out and went towards the market place. I followed him, and when I found which way he was going, I ran up another street and, just as he got to the top of the market place, I met him full in the face, and expressed my astonishment at meeting him, just as if it was promiscuous-like, and then I got him into a little gossip upon smuggling and such like, and pulling out my 'baccy I asked him to accept it; and that opened his heart and set his tongue free. So after a little circumlocution I ventured to ask him how the young man was, and to tell him how unhappy his sweetheart was, and after a few more remarks he promised the next time I went to Norwich he would take me with him when he was going his rounds, and perhaps he might leave me for a few

minutes in young Burnet's cell. So I promised to go to-day and take him some capital brandy and more 'baccy. I told Hannah all about it, but we thought it best not to say a word to you, in case things did'nt turn out all right; but I very nearly let the pig out of the poke when I took the laurestinas from you.

"As good luck would have it, the man was as good as his word, and so was I with my brandy and 'baccy. I went his rounds with him, and he took me into two or three of the cells, for a sort of cloak-like, in case of any spy watching us, and at last he put me into the one I wished, and giving me the prisoners' rations, he told me to make the best of my time and be ready for him in a quarter of an hour.

"I felt a little bit queer at the idea of being locked up, but it was only for a moment, for I thought how happy you would be when I got home.

"I went in and put the rations on the little deal table; but I didn't speak. One of

them took no notice; but the young one seemed surprised at seeing a stranger. I looked hard at him for a moment, and then went up to him with the bunch of laurestinas in my hand and said: 'This is a poor place to be cooped up in, sir; perhaps these blossoms will make it look a little more cheerful; they were given to me by the prettiest girl in all these parts and one as would have been glad to have come with me to the prison had she known what I was after, and now I only want a few kind words from you to bring the roses into her cheeks, which have been washed white by her tears.' There, old woman, wasn't that well said," asked Peter, nodding to his wife across the hearth, who returned the nod with a gratified smile, saying, "Go on, Peter, and don't keep the poor child in suspense."

Blanche could not speak, but a look of deep affection, a tear glistening in her eye, thanked Hannah for her kind and considerate sympathy.

"Well," Peter continued, "I never saw anyone so beflustered as the young man was —first pale as death, and then red as the harvest moon. He couldn't speak for a minute or more, but at last he said—

"'You are a friend!'

"I bobbed my head.

"'Tell me, who sent you here, and why do you come?'

"'I am a friend, that's certain; no one sent me here, but I come from one Blanche Stewart, who is at my house.'

"'Blanche Stewart!' he cried, clutching my arm, and I could feel him tremble from head to foot.

"After a minute or so he got calmer, and asked me a power of questions, and I told him all I could. How you came to be at Safewood Bay, with my old woman and me, and how you resisted being sent out of the country, whilst he was in danger. I only wish, my child, I could tell you the exact words he said to me; he told me to beg

you would not fret, but put your trust in God, who sooner or later would make all right. He desired me to tell you that although a prisoner, he was not unhappy, and only wanted your smile to cheer him, and hoped his father and mother, and his dear sister, would soon discover how good you are, and love you as he did. 'Above all,' said the young man, 'tell the dear girl to remember that she is mine in the sight of Heaven, and that nothing but death must part us.' The salt water came into my eyes as he talked, and I felt half ashamed of myself, and right glad was I when I heard the turnkey coming, and I said hurriedly, 'Here's the turnkey, and I must leave you. If you can escape, come to my house, and I will hide you so that all the jailors and soldiers in England will never find you, and take you safe over the sea to foreign parts. But I cannot assist your escape, as I have given my word of honour not to do so. I'm a man of few words, but I mean well towards you,' I held out my

hand, and he took it and gave me a good, honest grip, but he could not speak; it was his turn now to look soft. My time was up, and I was obliged to leave the young man, and was not sorry when I got into the fresh air."

A short interval of silence followed Peter's narration, broken by Blanche—

"But the ribbon, my good friend; how came James to give you that?"

"Oh! I forgot; I asked him to give me some token, that you would know, just to prove to you that I had seen him. So he gave me this, but made me promise to let him have it again, saying, 'he valued it more than anything in the world.'"

Blanche pressed the ribbon to her lips, and thanked Peter over and over again.

"Peter," said Hannah, interrupting the flow of questions and answers, "just fill your pipe and rest awhile, whilst I tell you what we have been talking about all day," and

she related all that had been discussed between them.

"Now," continued Hannah, "if you don't object to let us go to the Hall, I think the ladies may take a liking to the child, and perhaps interest their brother, the young Lord, in her behalf. He has great interest with the Duke at Norwich, as well as other high folks about the King's Court."

Peter sat puffing away at his pipe, and listened to all his wife had to say, and after a little consideration, said—

"Well, old woman, I shan't for a moment object to taking you, if Blanche will just promise to be more hopeful; but I have my doubts about these lords and ladies assisting the poor young man. I havn't much faith in them, but it's just as well to have more than one iron in the fire. So we'll start next week, and I'll go and see my brother at the same time."

CHAPTER XVI.

Away from the tempestuous waves that roll so gloriously in on the coast of our eastern counties, did our little party take their way early one bright winter's morning—through a country, which, if possessing no very picturesque scenery, is, during the summer and autumn months, adorned by a rich luxuriance delightful to gaze upon. After travelling some hours they stopped for refreshment in a small town, and then, recruited by rest and warmth, proceeded on their journey. Mrs. Skoulding in exuberant spirits at the thoughts of re-visiting her birth-place, and the old Hall where she had been brought up

as a humble protegée of the family ; Peter, scarcely less elated than his wife, at the idea of seeing his only brother; but Blanche, who was going amongst strangers, despite the brilliant sunshine which had given such brightness to the frosty scene, felt a depression of spirits, as that sun declined, which almost crushed the rising hope that had sprung up in her breast and although she heard the voices of her companions, she knew not the meaning of the words spoken. A sudden stoppage aroused her from her reverie, and Mrs. Skoulding announced the fact of their being at the Hall gates, and that she and Blanche must descend and walk to the house, whilst Peter drove on to his brother's farm.

Blanche stepped inside the great gates and looked scrutinizingly on either side. On the right was the gate keeper's lodge, through the windows of which shone the light of a blazing fire, and on the left an open space, skirted by a few stunted trees, in which was

lying a quantity of felled timber covered with hoar frost, looking more cold and spectral from the fire-light reflected from the opposite windows.

The gate-keeper, an old acquaintance of Mrs. Skoulding's took their packages, and went with them to the hall. A quarter of an hour's brisk walking brought them to the foot of the drawbridge, over which Blanche passed with a strange feeling of awe, gazing down into the deep dark moat, and wishing she could exchange that quiet dull-looking water for the impetuous waves of the ocean she had left that morning.

A dark gateway was passed through, and Mrs. Skoulding was cordially welcomed by another old friend, who at the same time gave the young stranger a look of kindness, that tended somewhat to dispel the notion that such a frowning entrance could only lead to a prison. That kind glance seemed to fill the whole court-yard,

as she crossed it, with cheerfulness. The large doors were opened and they stepped into the entrance hall; bright fires were blazing at either end, casting lights and shadows on the portraits high up on the walls. A flight of stairs, shut in by folding doors, led to the state rooms and private apartments of the family. A second door, towards which Mrs. Skoulding advanced, opened into a passage, conducting to the housekeeper's and chaplain's rooms; whilst a second passage gave admission to the servants' hall, kitchens, &c.

The housekeeper met the little party at the door of her room, and received Mrs. Skoulding with many kisses and expressions of pleasure, telling her that the ladies had been looking for her for some days, and would be delighted to hear of her safe arrival. Wrappings were taken off, and they drew near the blazing fire to enjoy a comfortable tea. Poor Blanche felt revived, though she looked around with a strange feeling of awe; but

she gave Mrs. Skoulding an answering smile whenever that good woman found time to think of her during the stream of gossip constantly flowing on between her and her friend. Blanche wondered when the talking would cease, but as she was tired, she was glad to be unnoticed.

At length a footman entered, saying the ladies had retired, and wished to see Mrs. Skoulding, who with unusual alacrity and evident pleasure obeyed the summons, whilst the house-keeper drew her chair still nearer to the fire, and asking Blanche to do the same, proceeded to entertain her with numberless anecdotes of her lord and her ladies, and the whole family for generations past. Blanche was an attentive listener, especially when the young lord was named; about whom she asked many questions and listened anxiously for the answers.

When Mrs. Skoulding re-appeared, it was time to retire to rest for the night but ere

they parted Mrs. Skoulding informed Blanche that the ladies had not only received her with their usual kindness, but had told her that they were pleased that she had brought her young friend to the Hall. This pleasing information caused Blanche great satisfaction, and she retired to bed with the prayer of thankfulness on her lips and slept soundly all the night.

It was not till some time after breakfast that Blanche again saw Mrs. Skoulding, whose province it was, during her short stay at the Hall, to attend to the dressing of the ladies. When she came into the housekeeper's room she was pleased to find Blanche busily assisting her old friend, whose kindness had sunk deep into the young girl's heart. Mrs. Skoulding informed her the ladies wished to see her immediately, and she led the trembling girl through several long passages to the presence of those she so much dreaded yet

wished to see. Blanche was very pale when she entered, but the kind condescension with which she was received and the commendations bestowed upon her work soon made her cheek flush with pleasure and her eyes sparkle.

Gradually the conversation changed from the work to Blanche's own situation, till every incident of her short life became known. The ladies questioned and listened with eager interest, and Mrs. Skoulding sat lost in wonder as she heard the simple girl tell those high-born women of all her own and her lover's wrongs; sometimes pleading for their sympathy in tones of softness and with the bright tears falling; at others letting her impulsive nature prompt a more impassioned, perhaps indignant, manner, when she spoke of the injustice shewn to James Burnet, which completely won the hearts of her auditors. Her tale was implicitly believed.

Lady Louisa, turning to her sister, at length said: "I will take her to Wilbraham, he shall hear all this little romance. He I think, has power to serve her better than we can. Come, my poor girl, come with me; you need have no fear, here you will meet nothing but kindness."

As Lady Louisa and her charge left the room her sister laughed, saying, "Hannah, that child's beauty will gain my brother for a champion. How lovely she is, and there is a fearless look in the eyes which assures me she is good."

Lady Louisa entered the library where the Earl was sitting, saying, "Wilbraham, I bring a petitioner for your pity and assistance."

The Earl, who was much younger than his sister, regarded Blanche attentively for a few seconds, then replied:

"In truth, Louisa, were I to promise what you ask I might also need protection.

It is not often so fair a suppliant comes to me."

"No," continued her ladyship, giving her brother an affectionate look, "nor one whose young life is such a romance; I will relate it, and then Blanche Stewart will not fear to answer any questions."

Lady Louisa gave a rapid sketch of all she had heard, to which the young lord listened attentively.

"So you want me to use my interest to obtain the liberation of this young man from prison?" said the Earl addressing Blanche.

"Oh, if your lordship would be so generous, so—"

"Stay," interrupted the Earl, "you say he was never a traitor, yet he was taken in arms against King James."

"True, true," answered Blanche, losing all fear as she met the encouraging glance of Lady Louisa, "he did join the conspirators, and was taken in arms; but he was no

traitor—he wished no ill to the King. He joined the conspirators that he might have power to protect another, and having once joined them, as a man of honor, he was true to his party."

"Yes, to save you—I understand. How long have you loved this young man?" the Earl asked abruptly.

Blanche blushed painfully as she replied, "You have a right to ask me questions, and it is my duty to answer truthfully. I cannot tell you when I first loved James Burnet, for I cannot remember the time when I did not love him. As a child, I cared for no other playmate; as a girl I sought to please him only; and afterwards—" she stopped, and the Earl filled up the sentence.

"And afterwards, you loved him better still. Such love deserves a better reward."

"Oh, my lord, do not blame him; it was his love for me made him peril his life. Had he not been true his father would have

taken him home; but he had injured me unwittingly, and he resolved to atone. Wild and reckless he has been, but his faith to me is unsullied."

"I do not blame," observed his lordship; "nay, more, I will save him if I can. But tell me, of this Sir Gerald Howard. Did not his title and wealth incline you to favour him?"

"Favour Sir Gerald Howard!" almost screamed Blanche, but after a few moments she said quietly: "My Lord, you ask me this only to try me. Sir Gerald never loved any human being but himself. He never cared for me; his object was to get me into his power, because he knew that was the direst revenge he could take upon the man who had thwarted him in so many of his villanous plans. He never loved me, and I—" she paused, then added, "I could not—cannot fail in my truth to one who has been so true to me!"

"Child," responded the Earl, "I have tried you because I wished to discover how much alloy is mixed with the true metal. You have been candid, and gained me for your friend; I can promise you nothing, but all that is possible for me to effect, you may depend shall be done. I must send to Thorpeton; who, there, will answer for your truthfulness?"

"Farmer Goodman, a man of unblemished character," answered Blanche joyfully, "the kindest, best friend a poor girl ever had; he has known me all my life."

The Earl wrote down the name.

"Is the young man's father kind to you now?"

"I know not, I have not seen him," she replied, somewhat sorrowfully, "but I think he would be so, because he sent James his blessing, when the passport was obtained for him to get away, and I was to have gone with him."

"What prevented you doing so?"

"James was leader of the conspirators then; and true to his word, he said he would not seek safety for himself and leave his companions in trouble."

"A few words more, my girl, and I will dismiss the subject. I promise to do all in my power to serve you, and I will be true to my promise, you must make me one, and be equally faithful."

"I will, my lord, I will; try me in any way you please."

"Make no attempt to communicate with the prisoner, and be patient. It may be long before I can act. If I can serve you in any other way, let me know through my sisters; as I said before, I will be your friend."

Blanche made no reply, but she looked into the face of the speaker, with tears of gratitude glistening in her eyes; the Earl was affected by her emotion and gazed long and earnestly at the grateful girl, then turning to his sister said:

"Come, Louisa, let us take Hannah's young charge back. I will tell her I am going to send to Thorpeton and that she and this child must remain here till my messenger returns."

The chaplain was deputed to make the necessary enquiries at Thorpeton; in a few days he returned confirming all that had been stated, and even told many other anecdotes which strengthened the Earl's interest in Blanche and induced him to consider it in the light of a Christian duty to assist the prisoner.

A few days after the trio had returned to Safewood Bay, Goodman arrived, and was cordially welcomed by Peter and Hannah, till he stated that the object of his visit was to carry Blanche back with him to Thorpeton. Susan Burnet was to be married in a few days, but she refused to leave her parents until Blanche was received by them and became one of the family. Entreaties, for only a day's delay, were usless, Goodman

had his way, carrying off the reluctant girl, but making the worthy couple promise to come and see him as soon as the wedding was over.

Notwithstanding Goodman's assurances that she would be kindly and affectionately welcomed, Blanche trembled as she entered the hall of Oakfield. Susan came forward to meet her with affectionate caresses, and loving words; Mrs. Burnet kissed her and hoped she would be happy with them; after which the former led her to her father, saying: "Father, here is your other daughter and my sister; are you not glad she is come home?"

Old Burnet gazed into the pale face before him, took the trembling hand, drew Blanche into his arms, and blessed her for his son's sake. The old man was conquered; the old lady's scruples had vanished, and ere a month had passed, long ere Susan returned, with her husband, the once despised girl had become the pet of the household—the willing assis-

tant in all Mrs. Burnet's domestic cares, the companion of her husband, his consoler, in fact, to walk through the woods with Blanche, to talk of his idolized son, to wipe away her tears, and, having done that, to be himself solaced by her smiles and sweet words of thanks for the kindness he showered upon her, soothed the afflicted father, who learned to love the girl almost as he loved his son.

CHAPTER XVII.

WEEKS and months wore away, and James Burnet and his friend the Independent remained in close confinement, first in Newgate then in Norwich jail, the victims of a premature step, which, if it had been taken a little later, would probably have set them on the very pinnacle of success; but the Prince of Orange had regarded, or affected to regard them as convicted traitors, and in mere consistency he could not retract his condemnation of their conduct. Such was his view of the case when it was first pressed upon his atten-

tion shortly after their imprisonment, and afterwards the pressure of public affairs banished the existence of James Burnet and his companion from his memory.

Soon after the incarceration of the prisoners, they learned from their jailers the news of the King's arrival in London, and it was with no slight feelings of apprehension that they received the intelligence, for whatever they might have to fear from the stern, inflexible, uncompromising William, they were utterly hopeless if left to the tender mercies of the cruel and vindictive James. His stay, however, in the metropolis was brief, and his authority very circumscribed. He had endeavoured to escape to France, but being foiled in that attempt had returned to London, where as much to his surprise as the mortification of the Prince of Orange, he was received by the giddy, ever-changing populace with shouts and acclamations. To the rabble he was still a King, though a degraded and

dishonored one, and the sight of majesty in distress has a powerful effect on the sympathies of men.

For a short time the imbecility of James, his sanguinary and vindictive nature, his bigotry and his despotism, seemed to have been completely obliterated, and while the reason of men was enlisted against him their feelings took side with him. It was, however, but a temporary weakness, and that committed by the lowest dregs of the people; yet it had the effect of disconcerting, for a time, the counsels of the Prince of Orange, and drove him on to more decisive measures. His aim, from the first, was to frighten James from the throne, and this, with the fate of his hapless father before the eyes of the timid monarch, was easy of accomplishment. William, indeed, was constitutionally severe, yet his severity in this case was increased by a refined policy, according well with the delicate game he had to play.

James sent Lord Feversham with a temperate message to the Prince of Orange, respecting the adjustment of their claims to the throne, but for some plausible excuse his lordship was placed under arrest; and thus did James lose one of his firmest, most faithful, and most able adherents. The Dutch guards were next ordered to take possession of Whitehall, to the exclusion of the English soldiers, and a message received by James at midnight, whilst he was in bed, intimated the command that he should quit the palace on the following morning and retire to Ham. All this was admirably calculated to excite the fears of a timid man—a midnight warning to escape that place, from the windows of which he might look upon those stones once sprinkled with the blood of his father.

James requested permission to retire to Rochester, and William gladly perceived that he was meditating an escape, which he soon after effected, flattering himself,

no doubt, with having overcome all but insurmountable obstacles to accomplish that, for which indeed every facility was afforded him. He embarked at Dover, and, arriving safely at Ambleteuse, hurried to the court of France to repose his saintship and his sorrows with Louis—the pompous.

But while William had so far succeeded in his designs as to drive his pusillanimous father-in-law from the throne, he was yet far from the attainment of his wishes, and had much to perform of a difficult and delicate nature. It was absolutely out of the question for the great champion of liberty and law to seize upon the crown by right of conquest, like his redoubtable namesake of Norman notoriety. There were laws and charters in the way, now much more formidable things than coats-of-mail and men-at-arms. There were, too, parliaments to be assembled, and speeches to be made, and every letter of the proclamation, by which the abdication of

James was announced, to be cavilled over by both Houses.

Then there was a proposal for Mary to be Queen, or William to be Regent; but the wily Dutchman was not to be put off with a crown-matrimonial, or a crown-conditional; so that question caused some additional debates; but at last all was amicably settled, and William the Third, in full right, stepped into the seat of the Stuarts. But William found at first that the seat of the Stuarts was rather harder than he had anticipated. As he was the people's King, the people claimed a right to make stipulations; and the Bill of Rights, in itself excellent and just, was not, however, quite palatable to a monarch of those days. William found the prerogatives of the crown were to be considerably circumscribed in his person, and that the people, jealous of their newly-acquired liberty, were disposed to cavil even at his rightful authority.

There was another subject of disagreement,

too, in which William had certainly the justice of the case on his side. The members of the established religion having suffered much from Popish influence during the late reign, very naturally, though not very nobly, expected a little pleasing retaliation. This is, perhaps, a weakness to which men are but too prone; but William was determined to enforce unlimited toleration, and consequently fell into the very awkward and ungrateful office of a mediator.

Meanwhile Louis the Fourteenth, the old enemy of William, warmly espoused the cause of the ex-King, and lent him an army and a fleet to forward his pretensions in Ireland; and in the May of 1689, James landed his forces in that island. The success of the invaders was at first most remarkable, though the desperate sieges of Londonderry and Inniskilling served to check them. Reduced to the utmost extremity, horses, dogs, and vermin of all kinds served to sustain the lives

of the besieged, while great numbers of the Protestants, compelled to quit their homes, perished for want from the inclemency of the weather.

At length William was enabled to take the most vigorous measures for their relief, and himself embarking for Ireland, commenced that glorious campaign, which led to the ever-memorable battle of the Boyne — the death-blow to the hopes of the exiled monarch and his brave and devoted, but mistaken and unwise, adherents.

William himself securely seated on the throne, was now at liberty to return to England, for whatever might be the dissensions on other subjects, all parties seemed agreed on the rejection of the Stuarts.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SUMMER was waning into autumn, several months of dreary confinement had passed over the heads of James Burnet and his friend the Independent, and they began to feel heart-sick and almost hopeless. At first, they thought that a brief period of confinement would have been the punishment awarded to them, and that they would be discharged as soon as it could be consistently done. They did not imagine for a moment that William would really punish them for their exertions in his cause, though his disapproval of their conduct

had been openly and decidedly expressed. They knew nothing of the many causes of discontent and vexation which had contributed to sour a temper not naturally remarkable for its amiability. They had not been brought to trial; but this they were aware was not essential, as they were convicted rebels taken with arms in their hands. Alternate hopes and fears swayed their breasts, as day after day, week after week, and month after month they went over the self-same arguments, and repeated the same considerations again and again, placing their anomalous and extraordinary case in every possible point of view, until they were wearied with their own reiterated reasonings.

At length they became habituated to captivity, and ceased to speak of the singularity of their situation. The Independent had a never-failing resource in his Bible, which to him was a complete library, and many a conversation with James Burnet upon

its inestimable contents led the latter to take deep and enlarged views of the Christian scheme.

The Independent, a man of liberal and enlightened mind, though deeply and critically learned upon all subjects connected with the Holy Scriptures, read not in that spirit of close and narrow criticism, which selects abstract parts, and petty points, divested of their connection with the whole, and sets itself to cavil at a stupendous system of theology, because it condescends not to teach the sciences. He was a type of those superior spirits among Presbyterians and Independents to whom the present age is beginning to do justice. Seen no doubt they were, for a long time, through the hazy medium of Charles the Second's licentious and immoral writers, who being in every respect opposed to them, distorted their acts and disfigured their opinions; but Time—that reconciler of differences—Time is laying his cold hand

upon the subject, and allaying the heats of passion and prejudice — Time is bringing them out from the mists of misrepresentation, and while men see that there was something of error and enthusiasm in their acts, some confusion of civil and religious liberty in their opinions, they are doing more justice to the memories of a body of men which numbered a Hampden and a Milton in its ranks. James Burnet derived much firmness and consolation from his friend, who drew his principles from that everlasting fountain of truth, handed down to us from generation to generation — the Bible.

The captives were sitting in their cheerless chamber to which the narrow grated window of a prison, sunk deep in a recess, gave but little light. Burnet was painfully musing over the untoward events of his past life, when his reverie was interrupted by the sound of voices at the door of their cell, the ponderous fastenings of which gloomy portal clanked and clashed as

they fell to the ground. Everything, however trifling, is an event which varies the monotony of a prisoner's existence. It was not the hour for a visit from the turnkey. Burnet gazed anxiously at the slowly opening door. The Independent closed his Bible and came from the recess of the window. There was something truly interesting in the attachment of these two manly, high-minded men, linked by similar fortune, and bound by something of mental and moral sympathy.

Again the friends in adversity stood like a couple of schoolboys with their arms over each other's shoulders, listening almost breathlessly, with a presentiment of something about to occur arising in both their minds.

When the door folded back it exhibited the expressive countenance of old Burnet. In the next moment, James was clasped in the arms of his father.

For an instant there was a dimness in the eyes of the son, a flash of fire seemed to dart

before them, and his ears rang as with the report of a park of artillery. He saw not for a few seconds, that while his father's head reposed upon his shoulder, his sister, upon her knees, pressed his hand to her lips, while Goodman and Emile Briffault gazed in sympathetic silence on the group. With his face still hidden on his son's shoulder, old Burnet gave vent to his emotion in convulsive sobs. James shed no tear, uttered no sob, but he had turned deadly pale ; a cold perspiration bedewed his brow, and he breathed so heavily that the sound of his encumbered respiration was distinctly audible in the stillness of the room. Susan wept profusely ; her husband was very misty about the eyelids, while our old friend Goodman rubbed his nose in a most vicious and vivacious manner.

The Independent had approached the excited party with a face radiant with benevolence and sympathy, until his feelings found their ordinary vent in fervid and

internal devotion. His eyes were closed, and he remained with his arms folded, as still and silent as a statue.

The silence had continued so long as to be extremely irksome, when it was abruptly broken by Goodman letting fall his stick heavily upon the floor, with an exclamation, which certainly seemed exceedingly irrelevant, though it answered its purpose:

"What a plaguy, dismal-looking place a gaol is?" at the same time dashing a tear-drop from his eye.

"My son! my son!" exclaimed old Burnet, aroused by his friend Goodman's strange remark, and gazing upon James's pallid face as he held him at arm's length, while a strange light seemed to play in his eye. "My son! my son! care and sorrow have been at work upon thy noble countenance, my brave boy. Where is thy healthful colour gone, my poor child—and the gay smile of thy glad eye, which was ever so bright and blithesome?"

It was quite evident that emotion had for a time, at least, over excited the spirit of the father, and a species of delirium had come upon his mind. The spectators were startled into a painful silence as he patted the head of his son, as though he had been a child.

" Confinement hath blanched thy cheek and dimmed thine eye, James, but this must soon be mended. This is not right—this is not well. You are not so trim and neat as the son of John Burnet ought to be—this must be mended also ; you must hold up your head, not in pride, but in prudence. Old Squeezer, the lawyer, says that the will is as good as pen and parchment could make it. Yes, my dear son ! it is all yours—all yours, I have not spent a penny. I have not spent a penny—not I. I am the servant, but you are the master; yes, my boy, the master of Oakfield Hall; ha ! ha ! ha ! Perhaps the title—money—Sir James—Sir James Burnet —ha ! ha ! ha !—my son Sir James Burnet !

ha! ha! ha! But, mark you, my curse cling to you, if Sir Gerald—no, no, honesty is the best policy—policy—psha!—virtue—rectitude—religion!"

The whole party had remained mute with astonishment at this scene; but James having regained his composure, quietly released his father's grasp upon his shoulder, and cautiously placed him, exhausted and fainting, in a chair.

"This beats all the rest," cried Goodman. "Burnet! Burnet! old friend — don't give way; cheer up, old fellow. Let me come to your father, young man — let me come to your father."

These latter expressions were addressed to James, who perceiving that his father had fainted, restrained Goodman in his herculean grasp.

"Let go my arm, lad—let go my arm; if ye don't I'll—"

Monsieur Briffault went forward to assist

Susan, who, with her ordinary placid presence of mind, had immediately arisen and supported her father's head, while the Independent as readily brought from a recess a flagon of water with which to moisten the fainting man's lips.

Goodman, seeing the propriety of composure, said:—

"You need not hold me now, lad. You were right enough; right enough, and I'm an old fool; but I will be quiet now."

James relaxed his grasp, and folding his arms, gazed, with inexpressible auguish depicted in his countenance, upon his father.

"Friend James Burnet," said the Independent, "if I had an instrument wherewithal to make incision, I have skill enough to let blood."

"Blood!" exclaimed Goodman, "you surely would not take his precious blood! Why, friend, he has none to spare—not a drop. Look at his pale cheeks, they are

bloodless—look at his lips they are as white as snow—aye, and I'll be bound nearly as cold. Take his blood! who ever heard of such a proceeding—surely friend, surely friend, it's not the right time to take away a man's blood when he's most in need of it," and the old man again let fall his stick upon the floor with more than his usual vehemence.

"I think there is no need," said Susan, quietly, "he is fast reviving; could we but place him on the bed I think he would soon be better."

"You are right, lady," said the Independent, "quite right. James, help me to carry thy father to the bed."

With this the two friends raised the overpowered and helpless old man and extended him on the truckle bed of his son.

A gleam of light streamed through the grating over the couch, on which lay the stricken father. On one side stood the son,

pale almost as the extended form before him; on the other, the Independent, with unusual anxiety depicted in his face. Susan stationed herself at the foot, her husband close beside her, looking eagerly from her father to her brother; whilst Goodman, with his hand resting on the arm of James, leaned over the bed, listening to catch the slightest sound. Long, long the painful silence lasted—long did the gazers stand around that prison couch their eyes fixed on one object.

At length the Independent laid his fingers on the old man's withered wrist, and felt the pulse; as he relaxed his hold, a sigh of relief escaped him, the pulse was resuming its accustomed throbbing. Goodman's features worked convulsively, the hand on James's arm trembled, till the latter felt that his kind old friend would soon require support. Once he attempted to remove him from the bed-side, but Goodman resisted, saying—

"No—no, lad! I knew how it would be. My poor old friend—poor Burnet! I'll not leave you," and observing the Independent's countenance grow brighter, he added, "I think he is better."

"He seems disposed to sleep," observed Susan, in little louder than a whisper, smoothing his pillow as she perceived the blood again tinging the brow of her father, and the regular respirations of sound and healthful sleep taking the place of dull insensibility."

"Whilst my dear father sleeps it will be desirable," resumed Susan, leaving the bedside, and going to the furthest part of the room, "to tell James the cause of our coming here, which will save my beloved father both a pleasure and a pang, both greater than his present condition could well sustain."

"Thou art most discreet," observed the Independent.

"An angel of peace and affection," re-

sponded James, folding his lovely sister in his arms, and kissing with deep feeling her bright and beautiful forehead.

"She is the very pearl of womankind—she's truly a *right-minded woman*," cried Goodman, "and almost makes me regret that I had none of them to trouble me."

The young husband said nothing, but his face glowed and his eye glistened, and we very much doubt whether he thought or felt less than the rest.

The tidings of the triumvirate were soon told. Through the influence of Emile, who had some high family connections in England, aided by those in whose hearts Blanche's touching tale had created such interest, an application had been made to the Queen, and she with much good nature undertook to espouse the cause of the prisoners. But with all her influence and persuasive powers she was unable to induce William to grant an absolute pardon, for he felt bound in point of

honor to maintain, what he imagined or affected to imagine, strict justice—namely, to punish as severely a crime committed against the authority of the late monarch as he would one against himself. The utmost, therefore that his amiable consort could obtain—her influence not being at all times very great with her husband—was a commutation of the sentence into an obligation for the prisoners to absent themselves from England during the King's pleasure.

The countenance of James Burnet became suddenly overcast, but Susan whispered in his ear expressions full of consolation. The brother and sister talked for some time apart. What she said to him has not transpired; the name of Blanche Stewart alone being distinctly audible.

During the conversation between James and his sister their father had revived from the sort of stupor into which previous excitement had thrown him. He arose and

joined the group; there was deep dejection on his pallid face; but his countenance had lost that look of wild, fixed despondency, that it had previously exhibited. He could now converse with something like composure on the subject most interesting to them all.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE announcement of James Burnet's release from his long imprisonment was communicated to Blanche Stewart in a despatch from the Earl of——, feelingly worded, kindly congratulatory, and containing assurances of future exertions for her happiness.

With an emotion painful from its intensity, Blanche threw the despatch, enclosing an order for admittance to Norwich jail, into Susan's lap.

"Read! read!" she gasped, and dropping on her knees by old Burnet, she seized his

hands, and with hysteric sobs, ejaculated—"I shall see him! You will see him! Oh, joy! joy!"

"My child," said Burnet, trying to raise her head, "tell me what is it? Is it of James you speak—of my son?"

"Yes," she exclaimed, starting up, "let us go. He is free! Oh, let us go for him."

"Father," said Susan, coming forward, trembling and agitated, "Blanche speaks truly. James is free, but his release is attended with a terrible drawback to our happiness. He must leave England in five days."

The father bowed his head resignedly, as he replied—"We must thank God for all blessings, even though not given as we would have them. Your brother will come amongst us again. Let us offer up our humble and grateful thanks for that. Let Goodman be immediately sent for, and then, Susan, tell me all about it. I must be calm, though after

such a long grief my head is bewildered with such good news. Take this poor child away. I cannot bear to look upon her wild joy."

With tearful eyes and faltering voice, Susan bade Emile take Blanche to her mother, whilst she turned her attention to her father. She had seen him banished from his home, had soothed him in sickness whilst in prison, but never had she found him requiring such management as now; and she almost rejoiced (for his sake), that the delight of soon seeing his son was clouded by the conviction that he would also soon lose him again—for one minute she had to subdue a joy that was almost too great for a frame enfeebled by long suffering and anxiety; the next to whisper both hope and resignation.

Thus engaged, Goodman found his goddaughter when he entered, looking flushed and excited. Going up to Burnet, he took the order for admission to the prison from his

hand, and hastily casting his eye over the contents, said—

"All right, I see, old friend. I could scarcely understand what all this commotion in the house meant. I found your wife and Blanche in a most excited state, kissing each other, laughing one minute and sobbing the next, and not able to give anything like a rational answer to my questions."

"My dear mother," cried Susan, "I never thought of her; my father was so overcome."

"Never mind her," said Goodman; "she is in good hands; your husband is with her, and manages her well. He's both kind and reasonable. I should have been in sooner, only I stayed to give that plague, Blanche, a scolding. I always told you," he continued, laying his hand on his old friend's shoulder, "we should get the lad back again. Bear your joy as you have borne your trials, like a man and a Christian. I will take the paper and be off to Norwich, and bring both

the long-caged birds to your hospitable nest."

"I will go with you," said Burnet. "I must be the first to embrace my son."

"We will all go," exclaimed Blanche, who heard the words as she entered the room, followed by Mrs. Burnet and Emile. "We will all go; let us go directly?"

"Hush, hush, silly child!" exclaimed Goodman; "be patient, be rational, if you can. Look at my worthy friend, and tell me if he is fitted to bear more excitement. Remember, you cannot feel as he does."

For an instant the girl's eyes turned on Goodman with a flash of anger in them, and her lips uttered something between a sob and a cry. Then she glided to Burnet's chair, and putting her arms round his neck, whispered—"Dear, dear Mr. Burnet, be calm, be like yourself. James must see nothing to make him grieve, and he will grieve if he finds you ill."

"Ill," repeated the old man aloud, "I am not ill, I am quite well and happy, so happy and yet—so miserable—but I will go to Norwich and none of you shall say me nay."

"No one shall say you nay," said his wife, "You shall go, and I will go with you. We looked on our son together at his birth—we watched over him in his infancy and boyhood together, and wept over his back-slidings. He is ours only, and we, who have shared his joys and sorrows through so many years, will go together to announce to him his freedom and bring him home."

All present were so astounded at this outburst of feeling, from the usually undemonstrative mistress of the house, that for a minute or two no one spoke, till Goodman broke the silence, exclaiming vehemently:—

"Well, here is a pretty kettle of fish! you'll all go to Norwich will you? Do you think you'll get into the jail if you go, or out of it

again if ye get in. I wish you'd act like sensible beings and not like gatless, witless idiots. Susan, my love, what do you say?"

"That my father must go," she replied; "waiting, inactive, at home would try him greatly. I think the exertion of going would do him good."

"Well, there is some sense in what you say, and I have no doubt you are right. Of course, I must go to take care of my old friend —But," continued Goodman, "your mother and that little goose there—"

"Would, I think, do better to remain at home," remarked Susan, "but what can I say? My mother has an equal claim with my father—and Blanche—the dear girl has been so instrumental in obtaining James's freedom that it seems almost her right to be the first to see and greet him, and—"

"But, surely Susan, you would not deem it right for all to go?"

"No," she replied, "I do not think it would

be right or prudent, that all the good should come upon James at once—it would be better that he received such happiness by degrees. I would have him see his father first and that would prepare him to meet others. I dread too much excitement for him."

"Dear Susan," cried Blanche breathlessly, "I will remain at home. You are right—I have been selfish—I thought of myself only and forgot one—I love better," she murmured to herself, again taking her place beside the now composed father.

"I, too, will forget my own wishes," echoed Mrs. Burnet, "but you must go, dear Susan, to be near your father should he be overcome—you can do for him almost as well as I could."

"Now that's what I call being rational," remarked Goodman, "so, now it's settled. My old neighbour goes to tell his son he is a free man once more—Susan goes to be near her father—Emile, of course, must go to

take care of his wife—and I go because common sense is needed amongst a set of omadawns who cannot bear a little good luck without whimpering and upsetting themselves and all about them.

"Give me a kiss, Blanche," continued Goodman looking affectionately at his favorite "and don't speer so tigress-like at me again. Mrs. Burnet, I'll bring the prodigal safe home, and in the meanwhile do you prepare the fatted calf, see his bed well-aired and have clean flannels ready. He won't look very trim, I'll be bound to say, after such a long imprisonment."

Burnet scarcely spoke, but hastened to get ready to depart, evincing no particular feeling till he took leave of his wife, for he knew what restraint she had put on her desire to accompany him; and when a large tear-drop fell from her eyes on to his hand, his own looked moist, and he trembled as she said affectionately :—

"You will see our son first, tell him how anxiously I long to hold him in my arms again. You will also bring the gentleman who has been so long with James, I shall be glad to make him comfortable. Everything shall be ready."

"And I—" cried Blanche, impressively.

"Must be quiet," interrupted Goodman, "or you must have a clog put on, like my wild colt, to keep you from straying. We all know what you wish; but, my dear child, in life, as I have told you before, we cannot have all we wish, nor do we, when granted, get our wishes as we think best. You must stay, and do all you can to comfort Mrs. Burnet; she cannot be left alone, so do not be wilful."

"I will not, returned Blanche, "but—"

"There, there, child," interrupted Goodman; "no more arguing. I know of old what your 'buts' mean, neither more nor less than that you will be good if you have your

own way. To-day you must be good without it. Look at that patient mother, she does not craze us with her—'Yes, Master Goodman, but—' We all love you, child; but a prison is not the place for scenes; nor is it right that a poor lad who has been so long shut up should be tried more than is requisite."

Blanche spoke no more, but putting her arm through Mrs. Burnet's looked wistfully at the preparations for the departure. Emile stooped and told her that he understood and fully appreciated her feelings, and was rewarded by a grateful smile; whilst Susan whispered a few words in her ear that caused a flush to spread over her neck and face. Still, it was with a deep-drawn sigh she turned away as the little party drove off.

The fresh air and the bright sunshine soothed the agitation of the father's mind, as they proceeded through the pleasant country. He was very quiet, inwardly praying for fortitude to bear his great joy as well as his

great sorrow. Goodman talked incessantly, but it was evident that he did so, to divert the thoughts of his companions, not to please himself.

Whilst the four progressed on their journey the two lonely women sat almost in silence, trying to realize the fact that ere many hours they should greet one, whom they had almost ceased to hope they should ever see again. The quiet Mrs. Burnet sat knitting mechanically for a long time, till having assured herself on the subject she had been cogitating, she arose, wiped the tear drops from her eyes, and announced to her companion, who was not so calm, that "she must go and attend to the airing of the sheets, and see that the rooms were made tidy and ready."

Blanche was irritated, nay, more, she was angry, and felt that she had been wronged. She knew that principally through her exertions her lover's freedom had been obtained, and she thought she ought to have been the

herald of his release. She felt certain he would expect her—and yet she was condemned to wait for hours, whilst those he did not love so well would see him, press his hand, and speak to him first. It was quite a relief when Mrs. Burnet left her to solitude, and she could pace the room and give vent to her impatient and pent-up feelings.

This state of mind continued for a long time, in fact, till Mrs. Burnet's voice was heard calling to her to go and gather flowers for James's room.

In a moment Blanche rushed into the Hall and snatching her garden bonnet from the peg, on which it was hanging, hurried into the garden. She knew the flowers James liked, and she went straight to a rose tree, but still under the influence of anger, she gave the bush such a violent jerk, that the beautiful leaves were scattered at her feet. This trivial incident recalled her to her better self. She felt ashamed of her pettishness, and carefully

gathered other blossoms and buds, selecting the most lovely of each, and then, with her lap full, she went to the chamber and became calm and happy whilst arranging her treasures, as she knew James would like them best.

The arrangements completed and occupation at an end, an intense longing for the time to pass succeeded, and for an hour the avenue was traversed by Blanche, who every now and then stood still, with sight and hearing both strained to the utmost to catch the most distant glimpse or the faintest sound of advancing objects. How she envied Mrs. Burnet, whom she found—when faint and weary she re-entered the house—sitting at the table near the window, pursuing her usual afternoon employment.

Blanche was so much engrossed by her own feelings, that she did not observe how often those busy knitting needles were still, whilst the knitter gazed anxiously through the

window. Had she watched her companion narrowly, she would have discovered that beneath that calm exterior lay as much anxious, ardent longing, as was running riot in her own breast. The mother was watching for her first-born—her only son—wishing, yet almost dreading, to learn how her husband had borne the meeting; and Blanche sat watching that mother, wondering she could be so calm, so still, till restlessness would let her gaze no longer; and she went into Susan's own room, threw herself on a couch, and, exhausted by the various emotions of the day, soon fell asleep.

Blanche awoke with a start, fancying she heard herself called, and sat up to listen. Again she fancied she heard her name repeated in Susan's voice. She started to her feet. Another voice (not heard for long, but well remembered) uttered her name, and she essayed to answer, but no sound came from her parted lips. Like a statue she stood, with

hands outstretched, and eyes dilated. She saw Susan gently open the door—the next instant all was oblivion—she had fainted in the arms of James Burnet.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE intelligent reader, who may have perused the pages of this tale, will immediately perceive the intended concatenation of events; but in compliment to that amiable instinct of our nature, which leads us to linger with pleasure over even the ideal happiness of the great and good, we will dwell yet a little longer and indulge that sweet propensity which makes us delight to revel in the imaginary bliss of others.

To follow fictitious personages through the depths of sorrow into the full sunshine of

happiness, is to enjoy such pleasing contrasts as light and shade give to the eye, as concord and discord to the ear.

Seven years have passed since the events recorded in our last chapter—years full of deep anxiety, intermingled with hopes of future happiness, to many of the characters of our tale.

James and his wife, with their fellow exile, were received with joy and kindness by Mr. Springfield. Blanche speedily regained all her natural vivacity and hilarity, and began her new duties with alacrity and energy. Her ever ready kindness, sympathy and aid to those in affliction gained the love and respect of the peasants in the romantic recesses of the land in which, for a time, she became located, as much as her light step and laughing eye inspired their admiration. Her petulance and irritability had been subdued by her troubles, but the impulsive goodness remained in all its strength.

James Burnet and the Independent, who had resolved never to live apart, became a couple of hardy and intrepid hunters and fishers, among the mountains and the mountain lakes; while Mr. Springfield collected a small congregation of pious Protestants, and preached to them the gospel, among their native hills. The only point upon which there was any discussion was when the clergyman and the Independent hit upon topics of Church polity; Mr. Springfield being a staunch episcopalian. About a year before the return of James and his wife to England, Mr. Springfield died in the arms of Blanche, whose care and attention of the worthy man could not have been exceeded had he been her father, instead of only a valued friend.

The Independent, too, did not long survive Mr. Springfield. He was accidentally shot by one of the peasants, whilst on an excursion among the mountains, and lived only to receive James Burnet's heartfelt thanks, and

witness his deep sorrow at their earthly separation.

Susan and her husband spent most of their time at Oakfield Hall, occasionally journeying to Switzerland, and were as happy as mutual affection, the realization of moderate wishes, kindred tastes, and attainable enjoyments, could make them.

Old Burnet took the whole management of the estate; his equanimity never disturbed but by the occasional testiness of his faithful and ever kind friend, Thomas Goodman, who, as may be supposed, grew rather more dogmatical as he grew older, and who, as sure as old Burnet had the ten-acre field sowed with wheat, invariably declared it ought to have been sown with oats. On one subject the friends never differed; James was the one object of affection to both, and both were equally sincere in their prayers for him to be restored to them.

* * * *

May-day was again near at hand, and the generally quiet village of Thorpeton was in a state of great commotion; but it was not the election of the May Queen which caused all the gossiping and revelry, absorbed the minds and attention of the inhabitants.

The old men sat as usual on the settle before the Royal Oak, discussing the events of the past and the present. The women stood in groups of three or four on the green, in earnest conversation; the young girls chatted and laughed, as young girls will do, whilst the village lads related strange stories of past events to each other as they stood listlessly, rod in hand, by the streamlet; all seemed excitement, expectation, and wonder. Never since the morning on which Blanche Stewart had been taken before the pompous Sir Richard Jenkins, had there been such a commotion; and now, after seven long years, was Blanche again the object on which all this talk was expended. Blanche was returning

to Thorpeton; not as she had left, reluctantly and sorrowfully, but as a happy wife and mother, and the future mistress of Oakfield Hall. Seven years of married life, passed in Switzerland, had in no way impaired the youthful love of James Burnet, for the wife who was to him the pearl above price; nor had that wife's devotion and trust in the slightest degree diminished. She had not merely been his partner in exile, but his true consoler at those periods when the deep pain he felt in being parted from his parents, caused him great anxiety, by assuring him that it was not a hopeless separation, and that she had a conviction in her mind that ere many years had passed they would have a happy re-union.

In their Swiss home they had been happy, wishing for nothing, but to return to their native land, and it was when this desire was uppermost in her husband's mind and he felt chafed like a caged lion at this exile, that

Blanche's deep love was manifested. James was ever soothed by her hopeful auguries, but he could not forget that his father was an old man and in the common course of nature not likely to live many years, and one source of agony was lest that beloved father should die ere he received his blessing. His kind, good, loving mother too, who wore life away in trying to make others comfortable—should he never be with them again—never be able to show them how purified he had come out of the fire of affliction. Susan and her husband had visited them, often bringing messages which only made the longing for home increase. Blanche would smile and soothe these moods, and often with a smiling countenance but a sad heart; she too had her longings and her wishes. She wanted to show her dearly loved friend Goodman another god-daughter, another Susan Burnet, but one whose violet eyes, fairy figure and golden tresses, one whose fond caressing manner

and gleeful laughter spoke her descent from the Blanche Stewart of other days. Above all she wished to place her baby boy, another John Burnet, in the arms of his grandfather, that baby boy who had for sponsor the Earl of —— through whose kindness and interest James Burnet's release from prison had been accomplished. Nor had the Earl's exertions stopped there; he had been working slowly but surely to get him recalled to England. He had sought him in his exile and learned to admire his noble character; had witnessed the deep affection of the husband and wife, and he thought he could not serve his sovereign better then to secure for him the fealty of an upright high-minded man. The wish was accomplished and James Burnet was restored to home and country, the lawful heir to Oakfield hall and its increased acres.

After the arrival of James and his wife and children at Oakfield Hall, the sowing of the ten-acre field was no longer the only

subject for argument between the seniors. If Goodman petted the little girl, Burnet regarded the boy with an affection, which, in its intensity, could scarcely be comprehended by those who did not know the pride still lurking in his heart. He exulted in seeing his son superior to himself in education, manners, and knowledge of the world; but his grandson, he was to become a still more powerful means to raise the family of the Burnets in the social scale! James smiled at these half-uttered hopes, but he would turn his eyes with a flash of pride on the little image of himself, sitting on the mother's knee; and then remembering the lessons he had learned, would inwardly pray to be kept from earthly idols, and that the Disposer of all things, would make his son a good, rather than a great man.

On these occasions, Goodman would testily employ his whole vocabulary of expletives, and declare that his old friend was as blind, respecting his grandson, as he was about

farming, and if left to his guidance, he would ruin both.

Little Susan was a frequent listener to these trifling sham-fights between the worthy old friends, and one day, whilst her father and mother were out walking, Goodman, as was his almost daily habit, had called in for a gossip, and finding only his god-daughter in the parlour, took a seat to await the arrival of Blanche and her husband. Taking a paper from his pocket, he called the golden-haired bright-eyed child to his side, and they were soon deep in affectionate prattle, which was considerably enhanced by the variety of sweet-meats which the said paper contained. Susan, after replying to some questions as to where her father and mother had gone, abruptly said, scrambling on to his knee:

"God-papa, are you a farmer?"

"To be sure I am, my pet," replied the old man, "Why do you ask?"

"Because my grandpapa told you the other day that you were only half a farmer."

"Tut—tut, child," said Goodman, almost testily, "your grandpapa doesn't know wheat from oats."

"My papa does though," cried the child, exultingly.

"Silly minx," said Goodman, looking lovingly into the girl's gleeful countenance, which brought the Blanche Stewart of other days forcibly to his remembrance; "silly minx, your papa knows nothing of farming."

"Yes! but he does though, god-papa."

"Nonsense—little stupid! I tell you that neither grandpapa nor papa know wheat from oats."

"Oh, but papa does, I can tell you, for I have often heard him talk to dear mamma about sowing his wild oats. Have you sown all your wild oats, god-papa?"

"Wild fiddlesticks!" cried the old man, hugging his little darling fondly, as the thought of James Burnet's sowing his wild oats flashed vividly and somewhat painfully

across his mind. "You're an imp, and I won't be teased any longer by you, so you must get off my knee."

"Yes! but you shall be teased, though, and I won't do what you tell me."

"Hist! little saucy face; why not?"

"Because I have heard dear mamma tell darling papa, that when she was a little girl, she always had her own way with you if she teazed you."

"Ah! my child, your mamma was a very naughty, self-willed little girl, and did'nt obey and love god-papa as she ought to have done."

"Oh, god-papa—naughty man! how dare you say such wicked stories of dear mamma? Why I have heard her tell darling papa that she loved you better than everybody in the whole world."

"What better than papa?"

"No, no, god-papa; not better than dear papa, but the next best."

"Have you heard her say so, my child?" said the old man, stooping his head and kissing the child's forehead to hide a tear that came into his eyes.

"Yes, that I have; and papa laughed at her and said the more she teazed, the more you loved her. So I shall teaze you as much as ever I can, and then you'll love me quite as well as you did dear mamma. Won't you, darling god-papa?" and she looked lovingly and saucily in the old man's face.

"No, little scare-crow, I shall whip you instead of loving you. I am grown older and wiser."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed little Susan, "grown wiser!"

"Yes, saucy face, grown wiser," said the old man patting her cheek.

"That's just what mamma says you never will do, and so does papa; they both say you'll spoil your god-daughter just as much as you did mamma."

"And what does good-for-nothing, little

Susan say?" asked the farmer, looking affectionately into the child's bright eyes and patting her cheek.

"That she'll love her own dear god-papa so dearly; yes so very, very dearly;" replied the child.

"And won't do as mamma did—teaze and disobey him?"

"No, that I won't, dear god-papa," and she flung her arms round his neck and kissed him till the old man could scarcely restrain his tears; but after a fond squeeze he put her down saying:

"Get away, you tiresome minx; you are just as bad as your mamma was, go and tell her I say so;" and away scampered the child laughing gleefully, to meet her papa and mamma, who were coming down the avenue accompanied by old Burnet, leading and guiding the footsteps of his baby grandson.

THE END.

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